

Márk Stégmayer

CONSERVATIVE UNITY OR POPULIST SOLUTIONS?

Family Policy Reforms in Hungary and Poland.

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ABSTRACT

Márk Stégmayer: Conservative Unity or Populist Solutions? Family Policy Reforms in Hungary and Poland.
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Family policy is a rapidly changing policy field. In Central and Eastern Europe, the incremental change is not only due to changes in families and society, but also because of the modified political climate. These changes are most visible in two countries within that region. Therefore, this research project deals with the family policy reforms of the last decade in Hungary and the Republic of Poland. The investigation, whether the ruling government parties push the reforms in different directions, show not only the influence of right-wing politics and conservative ideas, but it also provides information, whether we can still perceive these parties as conservative, or if there is a transformation towards a populist direction with a mixed-policy set of neo-conservative, post-socialist and nationalist elements. With the selected comparative method of Mill's method of difference and content analysis as the research approach, the thesis explores the above-mentioned effects. The results show that the governing Hungarian and Polish parties do not follow a right-conservative path, but a populist "bricolage" politics with different ideologies, therefore, the family policy outputs differ a lot, although the official intentions of the policy-makers in both countries are the same.

Keywords: Family Policy, Hungary, Poland, Comparative Social Policy, Family Policy Reforms, Party Politics

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, most of the countries in the World, especially European countries deal with various challenges and risks, such as technological development, climate change, or the rise of political extremism (Tupy 2006; Harari 2019). These issues can be observed in the most countries on the globe, but their impacts varying in every region (OECD 2013). Besides them, there is a big area, which cause significant challenges for the states and their societies in the western-world; namely, the demographic change, especially ageing society and the change of the role and constellation of family (Bogenschneider 2006; Bogenschneider 2011). These changes have their impacts in many different areas. For instance, economics should face with different needs and demand, but there are also challenges for the states. Due to the changed family constellations and ageing society, politics also has to prepare new answers, especially in the welfare states (Beck 2004; O'Donnell 2016).

Some countries see the most important role of the state as creating a functioning area for a good-working economy, maintaining the security against other countries and maintaining the security inside the country. As Anter and Breuer (2007) describes according to the basic principles of Max Weber, the most important roles and tasks of an independent state and can be observed since the ancient. Then, in the end of the 19th century came a turning point. Due to the first and second industrial revolution, not just the economy, but also the society and the political order changed dramatically (Harari 2019). More and more people started to live in towns and cities and a new social group, namely the working class became the biggest social class in the society (Jones 1996). This social class has had new challenges. As Gough (1979) describes, not as the rural populations, they lost their ability to manufacture their own beverage and started to work without any social security. Moreover, these people moved to the towns to smaller living places, where the bigger families were collapsed.

Therefore, as Gough (1979) writes, in the end of the 20th century, some European countries started to implement their first social security systems. Pension benefits, unemployment benefits, or a comprehensive insurance system were implemented (Inglot 2008). After some decades and the two World Wars, women started to be more active on the labour market and started to become the same legal rights as men (Gough 2019). Therefore, as Ooms (1990) argues, the welfare states started to implement schemes for the families, because their absolute care-giver position in the family was not there anymore. Still, according to Pascall and Manning (2000), until the end of the 20th century, most of the welfare schemes were based on heteronormative marriage-based families and this phenomenon is still

important in many conservative welfare societies. Afterwards, after the golden era of the Welfare states in the 1980s, the welfare societies started with retrenchments in their systems (Schustereder 2010). As Dethloff (2015) highlights, they had to realise the new social realities and constructs and have implemented new more gender equal schemes, although, these reform processes were always complicated, due to the complexity of the systems and the strong influence of ideas and values on welfare policies.

Ageing population, low fertility, the diversity of family forms, work-life-balance, or gender equality are therefore not new phenomena. These nowadays often used terms describe the developments and significant changes in our society comprehensively, which started in the second half of the 20th century. Bonoli (2007) argues in this case that although many researches have been showed these processes since the second half of the last century, many political decision makers did not start to change the laws and policies for families. As an effect according to Beck (2004), since the 1980s, we can see that the policies often cannot react on the recent social problems. More precisely, they are effective against so-called old social risks, but they cannot support the citizen in case of the new social risks (Rovny 2014).

From the different areas, family policy can deliver a perfect example for the previously mentioned issues. As Rovny (2014) describes, nowadays, family policies are often struggling to protect the citizens and their families against poverty, or exclusion. Moreover, many policies do not fit to the current lifestyle of the people (Dethloff 2015). Therefore, the policymakers should start to react, and they have to try to reform the family policy schemes in many countries and regions. Consequently, Cousins (2005) the importance to examine, how the new policies will be created and implemented, moreover, which will be the key characteristics for the new schemes. Every independent state has its right to create its own system. Therefore, due to the different settings and issues, family policy schemes are unique in every country (Zagel 2016). Although, it does not mean there are no similarities. According to Anckar (2008) and Lijphart (1971), the research of these similarities and differences can deliver many important information for the researchers, but they can be also important for the policymakers, it is enough to think about the best practices within the “European Employment Strategy” program from the European Commission (European Commission 2019). To do comparisons, Bonoli (2007) remarks that it is very crucial to set the time, region, the countries, or places, which will be compared, accidentally selection can often lead to

false outputs. It is important to present the reasons for the comparison and show, why does it make sense to compare.

In 1989 and 1990, in Europe happened many important changes. Fenger (2007) mentions the iron curtain fell, as an effect the two parts of Germany could reunited again. Besides that, the Soviet Union collapsed, which has an enormous effect on Central and East Europe. Inglot (2008) describes that many East European countries, such as the Baltic countries, Moldova, Ukraine, or Belarus became an independent state. Moreover Fitzmaurice (1998) shows, many Central East European countries, such as the Visegrád countries, namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia could manage a velvet revolution without war and changed their economic and political system to capitalism based liberal democracies. Therefore, as it is visible from the research of Düring et al (2011) also Hašková and Saxonberg (2016) these countries had to start with comprehensive reforms in all policy fields, especially in social policies, because the logic of the old state socialism and the new market based liberal system were not compatible. It was the case also in Hungary and Poland, in the two cases of this thesis.

Hungary and Poland both have similar political processes after the millennium. Inglot, Szikra, Rał (2012) remarks that both countries followed the same political path until the end of the first decade of the 21st century. EU-accession, NATO-accession, the Economic crisis influenced the politics in both countries. As an effect, in the 2010s, in both countries came conservative right-wing governments into power, which have started to implement major changes in the welfare schemes of the countries.

In the recent days, both countries face with negative demographic trends. The previous scientific researches, such as Aczél, Szelewa, Szikra (2014) show that both governments have similar ideas on family models, emigration, and migration. According to their values, a high fertility levels are important for the future of the country. Moreover, there are also some comparable reform agendas in the countries. Aczél, Szelewa, Szikra (2014) and Szikra (2018) show that the reform paths in these countries are often based on the conservative ideas of the ruling parties and their think-tanks and close communities.

Szelewa, Szikra (2014) presents that until the end of the 2010s, both countries created new set-ups for family policies and changed the until that time working systems. Therefore, it is an important question, how these reforms were implemented, what were the most important ideas and logics behind the new schemes. To summarize, which crafts and concepts were behind these reform paths.

1.1. Structure of the thesis

The following work presents the key ideas and forces behind the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland between the Great Recession and the end of the 2010s. After introduction to the topic and clarifying the research question, this thesis delivers a brief introduction into the selected countries. Afterwards, the social policy field family policy will be presented with its sub-categories, moreover the readers get information about possible processes behind welfare state development. Although these reforms were implemented not long ago, there are already many researches in this topic. Therefore, there is a section with the most suitable articles in this area which delivers the current academic stand about the family policy reforms in the selected countries.

These parts will be continued with the methodological concepts of this thesis. Besides the variables and comparative design, this part will describe the process of the empirical part of the research and shows the steps from the data collection to the comparison and discussion of the data.

Then, the thesis will show the various reforms and their effects on the family policy schemes in Hungary and Poland. Finally, the thesis shows a comparison between the two countries and gives summary about the similarities and differences, in which the differences will be in foreground, due to the comparison method. At the end, the work delivers a summary with the collected findings and knowledge, besides that, it delivers a conversation about the possible future of family policy in Hungary and Poland.

1.2. Objectives and Research Question

As was already mentioned, family policy is a quickly changing and developing field. Due to its many issues and questions, such as demographic changes or financial shortages, there are many countries, where family policies are in a reform phase or will be reformed in the next years (Janta, Iakovidou, Butkute 2018). Therefore, as Cousins (2005) writes, it is important to observe which forces and ideas can be examined, which makes a passable reason for this scientific project in social sciences. The plan for this research is to compare two countries with different, but comparable family policy systems and see whether their reform process is different under a specific view. These specific views are in this case the impact of right-wing governments and conservative ideas on family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland.

The main argument is that the right-wing-governments in Hungary and Poland and their conservative-populist views on family policy push the reforms in the countries in different directions, because, as also Szikra (2018) argues, the governing right-wing parties do not follow a conservative path anymore, they follow much more a populist “bricolage” politics with a mix of economic liberalism and conservative-autocratic policies with many post-socialistic elements. To examine this development, the thesis will investigate the similarities between the family policy reforms in the 2010s. The selection of this time period is due to significant reasons. Rohac (2018) also Grzebalska and Pető (2008) find out that since 2007 in Poland and since 2010 in Hungary, both countries have right-wing governments and both parties started to implement populist-far right elements in their recent family policy reforms since 2014. Hence, the focus will be on the reforms in the last decade, between 2010 and 2019.

The main goals of the research will be the investigation, whether the reform directions are different, moreover, the roles and effects of conservative and populist ideas and right-wing governments in the policy-making process.

The importance of the question is that there are many researches about the emergence and development of welfare states. The scientific community tries to find out, which forces, and processes can successfully change policies and implement new schemes and as Csaba (2019) writes, whether the ruling unorthodox parties in the selected countries can create a unique way to reform the social policy schemes.

The main argument of this research project is that the development of welfare schemes, in this case the development of family policy schemes is dependent on the ruling ideas and the party preference of the governments. While Hungary and Poland share many socioeconomical similarities, the family policy system of Hungary and Poland highly differs. While the Polish system shows more universal elements and tries to service the whole population with their benefit schemes, the Hungarian model is more for the upper and middle classes, while the poor part of the population is often excluded from the benefit schemes. Moreover, the recent family policy reforms have also different characteristics, although the existence and importance of right-wing governments are visible in both countries. Therefore, the main question is about their effects on the family policy reforms in the last decade.

Research question:

How did the governing right-wing parties and conservative ideas affect the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland between 2010 and 2019?

Do these affect the reform outputs in a similar or different way?

1.3. Brief Overview about the policy changes in Hungary and Poland

Both countries have many similarities in their history and recent situation. As Fitzmaurice (1998) writes, after World War II, Hungary and Poland were faced with many victims, difficulties and damages and both countries had been occupied by the Soviet Army for forty years. Inglot (2008) describes that the Soviet influence was strong in the political and economic life of the countries for the next four decades and strongly influenced the welfare state of the countries. Until the political change in 1989/90, both countries developed a welfare regime following the sample of the Soviet Union (Hašková, Saxonberg 2015; Düring et al. 2011). As Fenger (2007) discusses, until now, the heritages of the old welfare schemes are still recognisable and typical characteristics of the former regime, such as universal and generous benefits are still visible. Back then, officially, the socialist regime tried to achieve equality within the society and all the regulations were monitored and controlled by the state (and the socialist party). The main values for the previous system was based on universalism and comprehensive benefit schemes to avoid poverty for the whole society, such as in pension, employment, or family policy. For instance, these principles made possible that Hungary had one of the most generous maternity leave systems in the world, but also in Poland, the cash benefits were comparable much higher than in many West-European countries. Due to the generous benefits schemes, as Inglot (2008) and Kornai (1992) remark, mostly in the older generations, there is a positive attitude towards the socialist system, because they felt themselves safer than nowadays. Because of the current demographic changes, these senior groups are important base for the political parties, this gives another important ground, why the old schemes are still part of the system.

According to Fenger (2007), Hašková, Saxonberg (2016) and Fitzmaurice (1998), in the 1990s, both nations transitioned their system to a liberal market-oriented state and became a liberal democracy. In that time, Hungary and Poland started to change their welfare policies comprehensively, where the EU, the World Bank and other international institutions have been playing an important role. Moreover, the Catholic Church can be observed as an important institution for the politics in these countries. Especially in Poland, the Catholic

Church shaped the policies effectively. In the first half of the 2000s, both countries had strong economic growth and increasing standard of living. Their (re)integration to the Western countries with the accession to NATO and the EU was completed. After the economically difficult period until the end of the 1990s, due to the prosperous economics, the countries continued their generous family policy system, although it was already clear that these schemes were often expensive and unequal. Marginalised groups were often excluded from the systems, but the politicians did not change to system, because the population used to have these high benefit levels.

Afterwards, at the end of the decade, the economic and political situation radically changed. As Martin (2017) and Szikra (2018) write, Hungary almost suffered a state bankruptcy because of the negative impacts of the Great Recession and mismanagement of economic policies of the former left-wing governments between 2002-2009 and high debts in foreign currencies. In 2010, the former left-liberal government was replaced to a conservative-right-wing government with a 2/3 majority in the Hungarian parliament. Since then, this government was re-elected two times in 2014 and in 2018 with 2/3 majority again (European Election Database). Although Poland did not have such serious issues due to the Great Recession, Kaminski (2018) writes that the Slavic country also had some economics difficulties and changes in the political environment. Since the end of the 2000s, they have been continuously right-wing parties elected to form a government in Warsaw. Although, the dominance of the PiS party has been important after the election in 2014. This is also the starting point for the comprehensive social policy reforms in the country. As it is visible from the last paragraphs, Hungary and Poland share many similarities and these connections are also observable in their policies.

Although there are significant different characteristics, therefore, the policy outputs of the countries are in many factors different. Besides that, the recent political developments can be reasons for different reform paths in the selected countries, due to the different decisions of the otherwise similar-minded political parties in the governments of Hungary and Poland.

Emigration to the old EU Member States, low fertility rates and low female labour market participation are serious issues in both countries and the recent reforms focuses on these phenomena (Béland, Petersen 2014). Cousins (2015) discusses, there are different ideas and theories for the developments in social policy, how the new policies can develop. This research is going to use the theory of partisan politics and observe the role of conservative ideas for the policy-making process. The importance of ideas on social policy is an evident

area for the researchers on social sciences. Moreover, Béland (2019) writes, ideas often lead scientific classification and previous research.

2. Conceptualizing Family Policy

The following chapter gives information about the different meanings and concepts about family policy as a part of social policies. Moreover, the different fields of family policies will be presented, which fields play an important role in this research project, due to their incrementally changes in the reform processes in Hungary and Poland.

2.1. Definitions

As Lohmann and Zagel (2016) write, family policy can be described as a part of social policies. Social policies are a diverse group of political settings, which can change the life of the citizens. The different tools and schemes of social policy are mostly developed by national governments. As Bogenschneider (2006) mentions, every independent state has the right to implement their own system. Therefore, there are various solutions around the world, although there is a highly significant international discourse about the best practices in social policy. It makes the comparison between the countries problematical because each system can vary a lot. On the contrary, it gives an opportunity for the researchers to build clusters and find similarities and differences between the systems. As social policies are the main background for the welfare states, the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990) should not be unnoticed. He created a classification, where he created different clusters of countries, which shares many similarities in their systems. This gives an evidence for the necessity and validity of social policy comparisons.

There are many different fields of social policy. Zagel (2016), Kennett (2006) describes the most important fields can be seen pension policy, health policy, family policy, disability policy, or education policy. To summarize, legislation and schemes, which can affect human welfare and their standard of living. The borders between the fields are not strict, there are many policies which can affect more than one social policy field.

Family policy can be described as one of the significant fields. Inglot (2008) and Gough (1979) sees the first family policy schemes were typically implemented after the World War I, but family policy had to wait until the 1990s, when it became a single social policy field, which was researched internationally. The ruling questions of this field according to Mätzke, Ostner (2010) are the changes and affects, moreover the future of the family policy systems.

The classification of family policy has often been burdened because its schemes are often affecting other social policy fields, such as labour market policies or pension policies. Therefore, as Lohmann and Zagel (2016) mentions, it is always important to notice that the research after family policies should be also contain schemes, which are normally clustered to other policy fields.

The first comprehensive terminology of family policy was written by Ooms (1990), who described the most important goals and effects of family policy. As Ooms writes, family policy can be noted as a policy umbrella, which contains all the policies around the life of families. The four most important explicit functions are the following:

1. *family creation*

- 1.1. *to marry or divorce*

- 1.2. *to bear or adopt a child*

2. *economic support*

- 2.1. *to provide financially for members' basic needs*

3. *childrearing*

- 3.1. *to socialize the next generation*

4. *caregiving*

- 4.1. *to provide assistance for the disabled, frail, ill and elderly*

(Bogenschneider 2006: 4 after Ooms 1990).

As Bogenschneider (2006) describes, one of the most important characteristic of family policy is that the schemes and programs of these policies are targeted to a group of people and not to individuals. Most of the time, social policies are targeted to individuals, such as at social insurance, or unemployment benefits. On the contrary, family policy is working with a group of people, namely with the members of the family. These members in the families can be tied together by law, performance, or blood. Therefore, as it is also noted by Zimmerman (1979), family policy is a highly ideologized field because the classification of families is not simple, because of the various factors, how a family can be classified. Altogether, family policy can be seen as a tool for the support of families by the state and targets which would like to rise the standard of living of the families.

2.2. Fields of Family Policy

Although family policy can be seen itself as a semi-cluster between social policies, this policy field has also its sub-groups. Zimmermann (1979), but also Lohmann and Zagel (2016) sees the schemes and programs of family policies are affecting the families in different ways in different life aspects. Some policies are targeting to support families with new-born babies, while other policies are supporting families with “young adults”, who need the support for getting higher education, or starting their career. These examples are also evidencing for the broad variety of family policies. The next sub-chapters are discussing about five policy fields, which also provide the background for the methodological data analysis of the research.

2.2.1. Parental Leave Policies

Parental leave policies are important schemes for many families. According to Matysak, Szalma (2014), these policies try to make sure that the parents can stay at home with their new-born babies for a while and after some months, these policies give security and the possibility to go back to the labour market without any disadvantages at the work place. Although this sub-chapter uses the name of parental leave policies, in many countries, the possibility for leave is open just for the mothers. Referred to Moss and Kamerman (2009) the main reason behind these systems is that the mother is the one who suffers from some physical problems after giving birth and they are the persons, who mainly look after the child. Although (Michoń 2015) shows many researches and show that the presence of the other parent is would be also important, there are still just a few countries with gender equal parental leave benefits. Although there are some countries, where fathers can also go to a leave after the birth of a child. Therefore, there are four sub-groups of parental leave policies around globe according to Moss, Kamerman (2009) and Robila (2012), namely:

- paternity leave,
- maternity leave,
- parental leave,
- grandparent leave.

In the first case, father has the right to stay at home. According to Michoń (2015), this scheme is not widely available and if it is possible for the fathers, then it is just possible next to maternity leave. Right now, there is not a single country, where just fathers can go on leave. Nevertheless, as Janta, Iakovidu and Butkute (2018) writes, in many countries, such as in Poland, or Austria, paternity leave has become an important pillar for the family policy-mix. It makes sure that both parents can stay at home, or the parents can alternate staying at home, it means, after the first months of maternity leave, the women can go back to the labour market faster, because the fathers can also stay at home for a while.

Michoń (2015) and Robila (2012) describes Maternity leave policies as the exact opposite of the previous policy. In this case, mothers can stay at home after the birth of the child. In the most welfare states, this is still most used method to protect and support young families. In this case, the fathers are often not included, which means that they cannot stop working after the birth of a new child. Matysak and Szalma (2014) presents that this scheme causes therefore significant gender inequality, because on the women have the possibility for a career break, which also means that they will be not as sought-after as their male partners. The decision-makers for this system highlights that this is the best solution for the children, because they need their mothers more than their fathers when they are young, although there are many researches which show that both parents can care for their children perfectly.

The third variation is the mix of the previous one according to Robila (2012). Parental leave mean that the parents can choose freely, which spouse stay at home with the kids and which spouse go to work. Some systems also allow a career break of both parents, but in most of the time, it is more usual that one parent can stay as caregiver at home. This system is better applicable nowadays, when families can have many different constellations and most of the women wants to be present on the labour market (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2007; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów (2007). Parental leave gives the opportunity for same-gender male couples to use this benefit and it allows for different gender-couples and women couples to choose out, who wants to stay home for how long and who wants to stay on the labour market. Next to the social impacts, it has also economic patterns, because there are cases, when the couples can get more cash benefits if the mother or the father use the leave, therefore it is more flexible for them (Matysak, Szalma 2014).

The last category is grandparent leave; it is not so widely used in the world. Still, Robila (2012) writes that Bulgaria and Hungary successfully use this system, where one of the grandparents can stay at home with the grandchild. This system has more advantages. Firstly, it makes it possible for the parents to go back to the labour market as soon as possible, so they should not face with huge disadvantages in their career. Besides, the grandparents, who are close to retirement age, can stop working due to this possibility. It means that they can have more time with their families and due to their absence, younger workers get more chance to get a job or become a promotion earlier (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

2.2.2. Gender Equality / LGBTQ+ Issues

As was also visible in the last chapter, some family policy schemes are promoting gender equality, while some programs are promoting women as the caregiver and men as breadwinner. Therefore, as Dethloff (2015) make his conclusion, it is important to investigate whether a family policy program makes a difference between the gender of the family members or not. Next to that, many schemes, mostly the old ones are often made for traditional family constellations. According to Korkut and Eslen-Ziya (2011), single-parent families, but mostly-rainbow families are often excluded of the benefits because their family constellations are not acknowledged as a family. As it is also visible in the Hungarian and Polish family policy discourses, Grzebalska and Pető (2018) argues the question of gender and LGBTQ+ equality is a crucial topic which can have serious effects on many families.

Therefore, it is important to investigate whether the reforms and policies give the possibility for every citizen, or just for a group of the citizens. The most important issue in this sub-chapter is the question, whether a scheme promotes male-, female-, or dual-breadwinner families, because this makes an effect for the availability of the programs. Some countries, mostly the so-called conservative welfare states, they still promote male-breadwinner model (Esping-Andersen 1990), as Dethloff (2015) concludes, in many cases, men are excluded from the benefits and women have to use them, otherwise the family cannot get any support from the state. On the contrary, Bonoli and Natali (2012) writes that mostly the social-democratic countries promote gender equality and dual-breadwinner model, therefore, both parents, regardless of gender have access to every welfare scheme. This can cause lower gender gaps and higher equality within the society.

LGBTQ⁺ persons can have also significant disadvantages in family policy programs, if the policymakers do not acknowledge their relationships and their same-sex relationships are not acknowledged as a family, although two parents are raising one or more children. Due to the lack of rights of same-sex marriage according to Grzebalska and Pető (2018), which is the case in most of the countries in the world (also in Hungary and Poland), same-sex couples have less rights for getting support if they start a family or they do not even have the right to adopt a child or use surrogacy, or artificial implantation. Lind (2004) writes, they often cannot use leave benefits, family allowances, or tax benefits, or just as a single-parent household, where one of the parents will be not seen as official parent of the children. In the recent years, there are many changes around these topics, therefore, as Velluti (2014) highlights, it is important to investigate how the policy-makers deal with the situation of women and LGBTQ⁺ people.

2.2.3. Family allowances

After the end of the parental leave schemes, many welfare states still support the families. Zagel and Lohmann (2016), Zimmermann (1979) and Bogenschneider (2016) describes family allowances are mostly cash-benefit schemes, which are accessible for families with one or more children between the end of the leave schemes and the 18th birthday of the child, which is often extended until the end of the secondary or tertiary education of the child. Therefore, as it can be read by Bonoli and Natali (2012), the duration varies, but most systems give this support while the child is not seen as an adult front of the law. Kennett (2016) writes, some countries, mostly the more liberal systems use a means-tested method, where poorer families or families with special needs can get more support than others. It is often dependent from the earnings of the parents and the number of the children. Other systems, with more social-democratic characteristics favour universal systems, where all families get the same amount regardless of income or housing.

Bogenschneider (2006) highlights, for poor people, this scheme benefit can be seen as a very important support, without which they could not raise their child due to lack of a job. Therefore, this benefit is mainly for the well-being of the children, who should get the chance to live within acceptable living situations, no matter what the career and financial situation of their parents. According to Robila (2012) and Bjørnholt et al (2017), Family allowance is also often used as an incentive from the governments to achieve higher fertility rates in the society. Due to a comprehensive family policy mix, with a high amount of family allowances, the families can be more interested in having a child or having more children, because it can

also bring them financial advantages. A very great example is the later discussed Polish Family 500+ program, where the main goal of the higher family allowances is to increase the fertility rates of the country (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015).

2.2.4. Childcare Facilities

Childcare facilities are very important for the family policy mix. Mahon (2002) and Bonoli, Natali (2012) argue, since most of the families do not live in a multi-generation home and many of the grandparents are also still working, most of the parents need support to have a place where they can leave their children for the time they go to work. Therefore, without these institutions, many families could not have a child, because they would not manage the accommodation of the children during the day. Although according to (Mätzke 2019), only the number of the child care facilities do not cause higher fertility rates, it is enough to think about Germany, where the regions of the former East-Germany do not have higher fertility rates, although they are much more child care facilities than in the western territories.

Zagel, Lohmann (2016) describes that there are different institutions for children, regarding to their age and in some cases, regarding to their gender. For the youngest children, creches and kindergartens are open. In these places, pedagogues and other experts help the children to have a nice day and start their socialisation to the existing roles of the given society. It is important to note that there are institutions which are free of charge and institutions where the parents should pay for the service. The case is varying in every country. Bonoli, Natali (2012) highlights the existence of different kind of institutions, some are run by the state or the municipality, but sometimes, a religious order or a foundation is the founder. Besides that, there are also kindergartens and creches at companies where the parents can leave their children while there are working.

Although schools are not anymore seen as traditional childcare facilities, they still help a lot for the parents in the first years, while they cannot leave their children alone. Due to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents, the countries of the world are obliged to manage free and compulsory primary education (United Nations 1948), but it does not mean that childcare services after the lessons should be also free. Therefore, many children are alone between the end of their education and the end of the working hours of their parents, or one of the parents (mostly women) cannot have a full-time job due to the family obligations. That is the reason for Mahon (2002) to describe childcare

facilities as an important part for the social policy mix of a country and the different settings can be seen as important subjects to investigate.

2.2.5. Family Tax Schemes

According to Anter and Breuer (2007) and Wennemo (1992), one of the most important incomes for states are taxes from the citizens. It makes possible for the states to secure the order, help for people in need, invest in infrastructure, health, or education. Therefore, the citizens should pay these taxes in form of VAT, social insurance, income taxes, etc. As Mätzke and Ostner (2010) discuss, as the policymakers realised the higher challenges and financial costs of families, they implemented different ways to give them financial support.

Cigno (1986) discusses different methods of taxation for families. One of the solutions is to give lower taxes for families and couples before getting a child. Therefore, more advantageous tax systems were implemented for married couples and parents. These schemes also show a wide diversity. In some cases, these benefits are universal for every adult with one or more child, in other cases, the benefits are only often for couples in registered relationships or married couple, while other countries make difference between the number of the children or the financial situation of the family (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

2.2.6. Family Policy Concepts for the research

The previously described categories of family policy give the main background for the research. These sets of family policy schemes can deliver important information, whether a whole research direction and output have one direction, or on the contrary, the schemes contain many different types of ideas. To do that, the research on parental leave policies, family allowances, childcare facilities, family tax schemes and gender equality issues will be described in detail for the Hungarian and Polish family policy system.

3. Explaining policymaking

Cousins (2005) writes that welfare states are not stable constellations. Due to socioeconomic and political changes, the welfare state and its schemes are often in change. It is highly true in a time, where the political parties change their views frequently because of the fast-changing needs and expectations of the citizens. Although it is observable that the system changes, but it is not so clear how does it change. The explanation of the reform paths is crucial for the better understanding of politics and power relations of a country.

The findings of Cousins (2005); Myles & Pierson (2001) and Allan, Scruggs (2004) are helpful to investigate this issue. Their findings are various, and every theory sees another factor the most important and most useful to explain the reform directions. Some theories can be observed, which are typically for one special social policy field. The changes in family policy are often described according to Inglot (2008) and Szikra and Rať (2012) by the importance of ideas, but there are also theories which are often used for the pension policy changes. Because the family policy system is a robust construct, it is often difficult to modify due to the various factors and high financial needs. Because of this, there are two theories, which are often used for family policy changes, namely partisan theory, and ideational theory.

These theories seem like proper decisions, because a robust system is hard to modify, therefore, it often needs long-term strategies and plans, which are highly represented in ideational and partisan theories. Partisan theory takes another important factor in the middle. It highlights the power of the ruling parties and shows their different notions about pensions. Due to the results of the literature review, this thesis argues according to these theories, because those can explain the best way the different reform paths in Hungary and Poland.

3.1. Partisan politics

According to (Häusermann, Picot, Geering 2013), partisan theory is based on the differences between parties, which are represented in the legislatures of countries. This theory works mainly with a binary system and explores the differences between right and left parties. The main argument of theory is that right and left parties have different understanding of welfare states and have different opinions, which schemes are the most suitable to achieve a sustainable welfare system in a country.

Häusermann, Picot, Geering (2013) writes that the theory was first used in the first half of the 20th century, when the party politics between right and left was more visible. Later, in the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, the theory was criticized, because the party differences are not so pronounced anymore, but partisan theory has become popular after the Great Recession again, because the studies in the early 2010s showed that partisan effects are still important and visible in the welfare state development (Savage 2019).

3.1.1. Policymaking of Right and Left Parties

The partisan theory argues according to Häusermann, Picot, Geering (2013) that leftist parties are more likely to expand welfare benefits and schemes, while right parties support welfare state retrenchments and smaller role for the state. This difference is explained by the different target group of the parties. Leftist parties are more focused on the interest of the working-class population and disadvantaged groups with lower income; therefore, they support a welfare system which comprehensive social security and welfare system. On the contrary, right party voters are more from advantaged groups with better standards of living and higher socio-economic status; therefore, they support less welfare state and more economic deregulation.

As it was already mentioned, partisan theory is criticized because of the differences between right and leftist programmes are not so notable anymore. Furthermore, Savage (2019) shows that it is complicated to fit agrarian, nationalist, and new wave populist parties into the theory. Therefore, the usability of the theory can be challenging at this essay, because the governing parties in Hungary and Poland are often seen as populist parties (Drahokoupil, Domonkos 2012). Besides that, at the beginning of the current pension reform, there was a coalition government with Donald Tusk's right party and an agrarian party (Naczyk, Domonkos 2016), although their importance on this policy shift was not central. The reason, why this theory was chosen for this essay is that these parties are describing themselves as right-wing parties and this thesis will investigate their pension policy reform schemes from this view, but it is important to note that there are studies which do not see the Hungarian FIDESZ party and the Polish PiS party as right-wing parties anymore (Szikra 2014).

3.1.2. Populist Parties

The second decade of the new century brought new challenges for the parties. The long recovery from the economic crisis, the changing social codes and behaviours, the 4th industrial revolution caused a new situation (Brynjolfsson, McAfee 2014). Many people felt themselves overwhelmed, because they did not have the proper solutions for the latest economic, political, and social problems. Therefore, as is visible in the research of Tupy (2006) and Csillag and Szelényi (2015), the parties could win many new voters with simple slogans and unsophisticated solution-plans. Those populist parties found out that security is a key issue for these people and the citizen are even ready to give up a part of their freedom, if they can have a predictable and safe life.

These parties have some similarities, such as the promotion of new and more equal redistribution, a picture of an enemy or enemies, short solutions, criticism against globalism and international organisations, they also differ a lot. Szikra (2014), (Szabó 2011) and Greskovits (2015) tried to find a single “populist path”, but it always turns out that these parties are using different schemes and programs which are the most suitable for the short-term goals. If the argument of this research can be validated, it will also show that populist parties are using a “bricolage” politics and they do not follow those “illiberal” and “Christian-democratic” principles, as they promote it.

3.1.3. The Governing Parties of Hungary and Poland

To understand the problems with the classification of the Hungarian and Polish government parties, it is necessary to describe them in detail. In both countries, the last decade brought a significant change in the political climate. In Hungary, the recent government party FIDESZ won the election with 2/3 majority. Since then, not just the country, but their own politics have also changed incrementally. The Polish situation changed incrementally when the PiS party could have its first independent government in 2015. Although they do not have 2/3 majority alone, they also have a significant majority since then which gives them the power to implement and change many new schemes. Just as in the case of the FIDESZ party, the PiS party has also changed a lot since its formation in 2001.

The FIDESZ- Hungarian Civil Alliance was founded in 1989 and it became rapidly one of the most important opposition parties in the time of the system change in Hungary. Back then, the main characteristics of the party were liberalism, and the promotion of freedom and market-based economy As Szabó (2011) describes, in the first years of the 1990s, the party described themselves as a moderate liberal party. Afterwards, in 1993, due to major changes of the leading persons of the party, FIDESZ became a civic-centrist party with clear right-wing characteristics. The first significant win of the party was in 1998, when FIDESZ won the elections and had the chance to create its first coalition government with two other right-wing parties. Between 1998 and 2002, the party created moderate right-wing politics in Hungary. In 2002, they lost the elections and left-liberal parties came to power for the next eight years. Szabó (2011) highlights that during these years, the party strengthened its right-wing characteristics and they moved to a more nationalist direction. After the economic crisis in 2007 and 2008 and the mismanagement of the economy by the socialist-liberal parties, FIDESZ got the biggest parliament party in 2010 and got a supermajority in the Hungarian parliament. Since this time, they are the most dominating political party in the country. As

Grzebalska and Pető (2018) mention, they used their huge majority to rewrite the Hungarian constitution and changed many policy schemes. Since these years, the party became increasingly a nationalist-right-wing party, where conservative ideas, neoliberal economic decisions are the dominating decisions. Christian values also became a central principle as it is clear from the research of Szikra (2014). Although the party sees itself still a moderate right christian party, many politicians, institutions, and organizations describe the party more as a populist party, who are weakening the rule of law and the freedom in Hungary. Today, the party does a nationalist-interventionist politics in economic and social policies and due to its autocratic political culture, many experts (Szabó 2011; Aczél, Szelewa, Szikra 2014; Grzebalska, Pető 2018) describe FIDESZ as a far-right party.

The PiS – Law and Justice party also has had its own transformation since its creation in 2001. In that year, the famous Polish politic twins, the Kaczyński brothers formed the party with their allies. Gwiazda (2020) writes that back then, the party was a centrist Christian democratic party. Although already at the beginning, the right-wing ideas and the values of the catholic church were dominating, the party could see as a moderate centrist party. In 2005, they could form a coalition government with two other right-wing political parties. In 2010, they lost the elections in the country, but remained as an important opposition force in the Polish parliament. During these days according to Fomina and Kucharczyk (2016), the political agenda shifted in a more conservative direction. In 2015, they won the election with a majority to get the right to create the next Polish government. Since this time according to Gwiazda (2020), the PiS party seems to follow the Hungarian path. The party implements significant changes in many policy fields without many conversations with the other political forces. Their interventionist politics in Poland became more nationalist and they started to describe themselves as an alternative to the “western” establishment. Due to undermining the juridical independence, decisions against minorities and highly gendered policies where women are disadvantaged, Fomina and Kucharczyk (2016) writes that the party got also the same autocratic, far-right, populist titles as the FIDESZ party in Hungary.

Many similarities can be seen between the two parties (Aczél, Szelewa, Szikra 2014). Both parties as Szabó (2011) and Gwiazda (2010) writes, started as a centrist party – FIDESZ was even a modest liberal party – but in the 2010s, both parties turned to an autocratic path with interventionist economic policy, conservative and excluding social policy. Their ambivalent relationship with the European Union seems also similar. While both Hungary and Poland became significant promotions from the EU, the parties are in a constant conflict

with the “bureaucrats in Brussels”. Their reaction to the critics according to the freedom of judicial persons, media and rule of law are also very similar. They point out according to their own description (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019) that as independent countries, they have the right to decide about these points and they highlight that their politics are always suitable with the international and EU law.

3.2. Role of Ideas

Ideas are important in many life aspects. Ideas are a help for the individuals to plan for the future and set goals for the next time periods. Moreover, it helps to create alternatives and different opinions. Béland (2015) writes that it is also the case in social policy, if its change is described by ideas. In this case, the role of ideas can be seen as following to Kingdon (1984), Jacobs (2009) and Béland (2019). It creates and follows principles and ideologies about topics and questions. It is highly important at the case of family policy because there are many controversial questions, where principles and ideologies can mean the basic for the different policy decisions. Next to that, ideas give different alternatives. According to Kingdon (1984), it gives the opportunity for the various institutions and other actors to formulate their ideas and findings about a topic and give it for discussion. Moreover, ideas help for creating opinions for the policy-making processes.

Jacobs (2009) argues, while other welfare state theories are based on institutions, veto players, or political parties, the ideational theory is based on discourses and argues that social policy change can be explained by discourses. These discourses are changing very fast and they can be led by the most powerful formations in a political arena. According to Béland (2015), to concretisation of an idea is not simple because it is nothing material, many times it is not even written. Therefore, a definition is important for the research after the effects of ideas. An idea should contain a clear alternative with clear characteristics which are based on principles and beliefs.

Summarizing, what does idea in the political sciences means, moreover, why do ideas in politics, especially in welfare politics matter? Béland (2019) describes ideas "as the changing and historically-constructed 'causal beliefs' of individual and collective actors" (Béland 2019).

Ideas are created because of given times, events, or decisions. Therefore, the identification of ideas is possible if ideas are seen as a product of different streams. These streams are according to Kingdon (1984) revised by Jacobs (2009):

- *problem stream,*
- *policy stream,*
- *political stream.*

The problem stream means that ideas need a challenge to rise. If there is an existing, or imagined challenge, there can be a belief, an idea, how it can become better, how it can be solved differently. Therefore, a problem is an important trigger for ideas. Such triggers can be events, media happenings, but also publication of the latest statistics (Béland 2019; Béland 2005). Kingdon (1984) describes them as following: The policy stream shows that these ideas are also possible solution paths. The main content should be a possible solution, or alternative solution. In this case, the starting point of the ideas is crucial. Different actors (institutions, policymakers, organisations, individuals) have different views on a specific challenge and their view can be seen on the idea. The political stream discusses this background of the ideas. Every new idea needs to have a background. Such a background can be a political actor, or an institution. The bigger the actor or institution is, the more important the inner power relations are. In this phase ideas become a very important characteristic. Béland (2019) and Tupy (2006) are in agreement that ideas will get their meaning as a symbol and a concept frame, it is enough to think about the political campaigns, but also of slogans of political program packages.

3.2.1. Conservative ideas

According to Huntington (1957) and Gibson (1996), right-wing parties and their right- wings governments often follow a conservative path in their politics. The identification of these ideas and ideologies are important for creating clusters and sees the hidden path behind reforms and policy processes. In the different policy fields, conservatism can have different meanings. Therefore, there is often a distinction between economic and social policies. In these areas, conservatism have a different meaning, which sometimes seems as illogical for the first sight. Nevertheless, a deeper investigation shows that they have the same roots and same goals.

Firstly, the meaning of conservatism and its ideas changed a lot during the last centuries. According to Huntington (1957) and Campbell (1998) conservatism during the French

Revolution was a reaction to the new social classes such as the agrarian groups. Later, in the 19th century, conservatism's main goal was to maintain the feudal-aristocratic order against the new liberal and social ideas, where the working class became a more important role. The main goal can be seen therefore in the case of conservative ideas to maintain the status quo, to maintain the existing economic and social order in the society. As Russel Kirk (1949) and Campbell (1998) highlights, conservative ideas try to maintain the order of the whole society and does not try to support single classes. Because of that, conservative ideas are not interested in supporting the interests of individuals and minorities, it sees the success of a society in the interest of the majority. Next to that, Huntington (1957) and Gibson (1996) argues that conservatism tries to stop and eliminate changes, due to the fear of the future and the possible problems, which can cause new orders. It is interesting to note that according to Korys (1999), conservatives often do not see themselves as conservatives, these people often describe themselves as traditionalist. A good example are the former socialistic Central-East European countries, such as Hungary and Poland, where the then ruling policymakers were against any changes, although they did not see themselves as conservatives, but as progressive socialists.

In the contemporary economic politics, conservatism can be seen after Korys (1999) and Gibson (1996) as staying in the existing system, give as much freedom as possible for the employers and employee and give as much as possible for the economy without any state intervention. These ideas are arguing that the recent existing economic order can achieve the highest welfare for the majority of the society, even though some groups will fail to achieve a good standard of living. A small state is a crucial point for Huntington (1957), which means that the welfare state and the welfare policies should not be comprehensive and available for everybody, it must be as a last support, if the individual otherwise cannot survive. Although the role of the state is not promoting, other long-existing organisations, such as religions are seen as positive players, because they can solve the problems of the people in a way, which does not affect the economy too much.

In social policies followed Korys (1999), the most important characteristic of conservative ideas is to stay at the status quo and promote the traditional roles and constellations. Therefore, a conservative social policy set would not follow the changes of the society and secure the new needs and challenges; these type of ideology tries to maintain the existing system and promote those old and traditional values for the citizens (Esping-Andersen 1990). This is the main reason why it can be sometimes a contradiction between economic

and social policies. While in economic policies, the conservative views promote the freedom of choice of the people and highlight their individual responsibility and try to achieve agile and flexible citizens, conservative social policy tries to promote the old, often rigid systems, such as marriage, living near to the family to be able to help, male-breadwinner model. According to (Szelényi and Csillag 2015), the main reason for these differences is that the traditional economic and social schemes were and are fitting for the people of the upper classes, while people of the lower classes cannot benefit from the conservative setups. While small state interventions for the employers can be beneficial, for the employees, it often causes disadvantages. While the traditional social rules, such as marriage, one-breadwinner model can fit for people with wealthy background, many poor families cannot afford to have just one breadwinner in a family (Esping-Andersen 1990).

To summarize, conservative ideas can vary a lot. Korys (1999) and Huntington (1957) write that their values and goals can be very different in different times and countries. Although, there are still three similarities. Conservative ideas intend to maintain the status quo in the economy, society, and governance, tries to stabilize the given social orders and reject changes because of their uncertain outputs.

These different conservative ideas are also visible in the case of Hungary and Poland. As the empirical data shows, the family policy outputs of Hungary and Poland differs, although both governing parties sees themselves as similar right-wing parties with Christian-democratic values. Nonetheless, the research shows that there are significant differences between the Hungarian and Polish “conservative” politics. That can be seen as an important reason why the reforms have in many times different outputs. As Szelényi and Csillag (2015) and Korys (1999) argues, the conservative set-up tries to fit to the existing system in a country and due to their differences, also the politics of otherwise likewise parties will be dissimilar.

4. Characterization of the Hungarian and Polish Social Policy

During the last decade, the political climate changed incrementally in Hungary and Poland. Therefore, there are many scholarships about this change and about the new directions of the governments and ruling parties. Although social policy is just a small part between all the political decisions, still, there are various researches, because there are so many major changes both in Hungary and Poland. The goal of this chapter is to show these relevant

academic works and show different views on the family policy reforms in the two Central East European countries.

4.1. Family Policy and Gender

As it is clear from the research of Michoń (2015), both Hungary and Poland are part of the so-called Visegrád countries. Next to Slovakia and Czechia, these countries create a group inside the European Union with shared goals such as cultural and economic exchanges and coordination of political opinions before decisions on the European Level of politics. Michoń (2015) did research on the family policies of these countries. His main target was on the leave policies, but his article also contains many basic information about family policy. As it is clear from his research, Hungary and Poland both can be seen as familialistic countries, because the care of young children is favoured by the (female members of the) family. According to Polletta (2018), it means that the states try to intervene with childcare facilities just in cases, when the family cannot secure the care of the young members of the family. This familialism is especially visible in Poland, where the number of childcare facilities is much lower, then in Hungary.

The article also discusses the effects of the family schemes on gender. As Michoń (2015) emphasizes, the Hungarian and Polish family policy systems are still based on the traditional family model, where the men are described as breadwinner and the women as caregiver. Due to this constellation, there are much more women who stay at home with their children when they are small than men, although the possibility of paternity leave was implemented in both countries, this opportunity is still rarely used. It also means that after a birth of a child, the women should break their career for years, while many fathers go back to work two weeks after the birth of the child, if they do even take a short brake.

Family policy is influenced also by other policy fields, but at the same time, family policy can also affect other policy fields. During the 2000s, both Hungary and Poland developed systems where the parent could have a part-time-job next to the parental leave scheme. The decision-makers and researchers waited an increase of people, who use flexible parental leave policies, but as Michoń (2015) shows, this is not the case, because in this countries, part-time-employment is still unusual.

The article of Michoń (2015) shows that “familialism” is a scheme where the traditional gender roles are promoted. Nevertheless, it is important to see that the female labour market participation is higher than in the conservative West-European countries, such as Austria,

or Germany. As Polletta (2018) highlights, the reason is that women were expected to work back in the socialist era, so it became the normality in these societies. Next to that, the caring characteristic of the women are also there, therefore, women should be faced with a double burden (Pascall, Manning 2000). They should be in the labour market, but in the same time, they should care for the other family members alone.

Therefore, parental leave policy can be understood as an important pillar both for the Hungarian and Polish system. Matysak and Szalma (2014) describes the importance this and other family policies for the re-entry of women to the labour market. Their focus is on the risk of the second child in the family. Their argument is that family policy is more important in case of more children. This article also delivers great support to underline the most suitable methodological solution for this research. As the authors argue, country-comparisons can be often problematic because of the series of different factors, which can be important, therefore, it is necessary to be careful with the selection of methodology. Matysak and Szalma (2014) also compared Hungary and Poland. Because of the complexity of the national contexts, they argue that these kind of comparison with family policy can be challenging, but Hungary and Poland are suitable cases, due to their shared cultural, demographical, and economic characteristics.

4.2. Socialist Heritage

The importance of the heritage of the socialistic time plays an important role also in the core argument of Matysak and Szalma (2014). They highlight that these times and regimes were contradictory both for Poland and Hungary. While the communist regime encouraged women's labour participation, on the other hand, the system promoted traditional gender roles. As an effect, Hungary and Poland had and partially still have a dual earner-female double burden model. In this model, women are forced to be in the labour market, but in the same time, they also have the caregiver role at home.

As Matysak and Szalma (2014) also mention, this model still exists, and the traditional and conservative perception of gender roles are still an important factor for the family policies in both countries. Besides that, the authors write about the different effects for parents with different incomes. While families with higher incomes can be more likely to handle if the mother gives birth to a second child and they will get just ca. 70% of the former income of the mother, poorer families often cannot handle this cut back. Therefore, many families with lower income do not want to have a child because of this financial burden. Although there

are some mean-tested elements in the systems, it is important to note that most of the family benefits are independent of the financial situation of the families. This was more the case in Hungary, where the level of benefits almost does not differ, but the Polish system also does not react too much on social inequality, although the research of this research shows that the situation changed after the reforms in the 2010s.

This causes a double problem for the families. Although families with higher incomes could afford more than one child, they often do not want it because of the career plans of the women. On the contrary, families with lower income often want more children, but they cannot afford them. Matysak and Szalma (2014) were discussing about the possible solutions, but it is not simple. Higher benefits for poor families would be maybe beneficial, but not socially legitimate.

Another article is a sociological thesis about the institutional roots of Post-Communist Family Policy in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, which shares important information about the roots and old logic of the family policy systems in the selected countries. The two authors, Hašková and Saxonberg (2016) argue that communist elements in family policy of the selected Visegrád countries are still visible, moreover, they still play an important role. For their research, they investigated the childcare policies. This article is important for this research because most of the thesis are about the post-socialist times, or the sources about the socialistic era are not up to date.

Hašková and Saxonberg (2016) shows that common communist heritage also means similarities in the recent family policy schemes in the selected post-socialistic countries. Nevertheless, the authors explain, that there were already some differences back in the communist time. They explain it with the differences of the dictatorships in the countries and their different views on family policies, moreover, their different views on gender and the role between family and state. The authors created an interesting comparison across countries and time.

Firstly, they compare the family policies under the communist rules. From that time, it is important to note that Hungary had much larger access to kindergartens and nurseries than in Poland, although the access was expanding in both countries, but in Poland, it was much slower. The Polish regime promoted child raising in the families, although the Hungarian regime wanted to give the opportunity of formal institutional pre-school childcare for every family, because it could help for the women to work more. This example shows that the differences, which appeared before the transition, stayed there also after '89. In the 1990s

for example, the access to kindergartens was still high, but the numbers were still much lower in Poland than in Hungary. Not just in the case of kindergartens, but also at the financing, Hungary continued its very generous benefit scheme and Poland continues its more selecting system, but the differences are still not so significant and the Polish system was much more universal than some of the conservative West European countries, such as Germany or Austria (Hašková, Saxonberg 2016).

There is also another important part of this article. Hašková and Saxonberg (2016) point out that paradigms and ideas played an important role for the family policy changes also in the communist era. They underline their argument with various family policy programs and reforms and show that male-breadwinner model, or Marxist-Leninist ideas were important strongholds for the former policymakers. This section is also significant for this research because it shows the way, how it is possible to argue with ideas and paradigms.

To summarize according to Hašková and Saxonberg (2016), the formal socialistic regimes had a controversial view on women. On one side, these regimes were more open to achieve gender equality than in West-Europe in the same time and many policies and regulation tried to rise the female labour market participation, but in the same time, the family policies were focused on women, who had the chance to stay at home with their young children. On one side, this can be noted as a very generous decision, but this scheme also has its disadvantage for women, because they had to continue their career after many years of maternity leave. This can be one reason, why gender pay gap is also in these countries relatively high, despite their socialist heritages in gender-equality.

“Comparative studies of post-communist welfare states can help us understand lingering influences of distinct and shared historical legacies but they also illuminate the impact of political action, party influences, ideological conflicts, and international institutions on policy making in Central and Eastern Europe under democratic rule.” (Inglot 2008:25)

As Inglot (2008) describes, the post-communist welfare states have a common heritage, but it does not mean that their systems are still the same. As it is clear from his article, the impact of political parties and ideologies can elucidate as important grounds, why the family policy systems of the former socialist countries can differ so serious. Therefore, the research on the different affects is important and useful to understand the different policy reform directions in each country. In another article from Inglot and his colleagues Szikra and Rať (2012), it was argued that the family policy reforms in Poland and Hungary were mainly affected by domestic party interests and international influences, such as the European

Union and the World Bank. Besides that, the conservative view of Poland was an important aspect in Poland and post-socialistic left-wing policy in Hungary.

As an effect, the difference between the Hungarian and Polish family policy schemes got just bigger until the end of the 2000s, because there were different party influences and political actions, moreover, while Hungary started to follow a liberal path, Poland stayed on a more conservative ideology in the case of family policy. As a big difference between the two systems, Inglo, Szikra and Rať (2012) shows that the Hungarian family policy was a very large-scale and universal system in the beginning of the 2000s and this stays so until the end of the decade, moreover, the cash benefits got higher. On the other hand, Poland has a more means-tested system, which was more similar to the West European conservative and liberal welfare states. Although the system got bigger during the 2000s, it stayed as a model, where without employment or indigence the benefits were not sent. This article gives a comprehensive summary about the impacts of party politics and ideas on family policy. Next to the international organisations, the authors described the first two aspects as the main factors for the different reform directions and outputs in Hungary and Poland.

4.3. Discourse about Social Policy

Next to the schemes and outputs, it is also important to speak about the ruling discourse about social policy and the language which is used according to this topic. Both Hungary and Poland were in the Soviet interest sphere for forty years. During these four decades, social policy was a comprehensive set of policies which helped to maintain and increase the well-being of the socialist citizens. The political transition, in Hungary more known as “system change”, in Poland as “velvet revolution” caused also changes in the use of the term social policy. As Aczél, Szelewa and Szika (2014) describes, that the shock in the beginning of the 1990s gave a relative important role for social policy in both countries. Due to the significant ideological division, the conservative and socialist parties started to use a different understanding on social policy. The authors also highlight an important information about the terms in these countries:

“...there is only one word for ‘policy’ and ‘politics’ in Hungarian and Polish, as both are called ‘politika’ (in Hungarian) or ‘polityka’ (in Polish). Thus, the term ‘social policy’ has most often been translated as ‘szociálpolitika’ in Hungarian and ‘polityka społeczna’ in Polish.” (Aczél, Szelewa, Szika 2014: 35).

Therefore, the translations can be sometimes difficult from Hungarian and Polish to English because it is not always clear, whether it was meant policy, or politics. Besides that, social policy has a negative connotation, especially in Hungary, because the socialist 2nd republic is often referred as “szocializmus” and the term social policy “szociálpolitika” seems quite near for the Hungarian ears, which give a negative meaning to the term. Nevertheless, Aczél, Szelewa, Szikra (2014) mention that social policy is broadly used in both countries with the meaning of poor policies or policies for vulnerable groups. Besides that, it is interesting to note that the term welfare state became as a term, which is not achieved in Hungary and Poland yet. Welfare state is used in both countries as a dream situation of the social schemes, just like in the Western and Northern countries.

If we change our scope to Hungary, it is immediately visible that something has changed. Szikra (2014) describes that between 2010 and 2014, the country has a new ground law (former constitution) and there were many comprehensive reforms in a short time period. The reason, why it could happen is the 2/3 majority behind the second Orbán cabinet. His government could reform almost every area because the veto players were not capable to stop draft bills, or they were too weak to do something against the new political plans. This situation was also true for the Hungarian social policy. The new government started to make notorious reforms, such as the abolishment of the private pension pillar, or the retrenchment of the unemployment benefits.

4.4. Ideas in Social Policy

After 2012, the government also started to reform the family policy schemes. As Szikra (2014) writes, the new reform paths do not show one single direction. From an external view, it looks much more as the government mixes different ideas and elements from neo-liberal, post-communist and conservative elements. Although the communication said that Hungary will become a family friendly place for everybody, the researches shows that the new reforms are more beneficial for the middle- and upper-class families and the gap increased between the social classes due to the new family policy schemes.

On the other side, Poland has also changed its system incrementally. Path-dependency can be crucial for the policy reforms. It can be also the case when changing family policies. Ingłot (2016) wrote an article about the Polish social policy reforms and path-dependency. The article contains a comprehensive summary of the Polish pension and family policy reforms between the political transition and 2015. This article was selected for the review because it

shows the most significant advantages and disadvantages of the Polish family policy schemes. Moreover, it gives a nice overview about the changes since 1990. To some extent, Hungary is also mentioned in the article, mainly as another Central East European example. Inglot (2016) describes Poland as the country with the least development family policy system in contrast to the other Visegrád countries.

Besides that, Inglot (2016) points out that path-dependency is much more important in the case of pension policy than in family policies. His argument is that the family policy had to change because of two very important factors, while the change of pension policy was not as much important. The international institutions and the EU started to promote clear recommendations for Poland for new more gender equal and inclusive family policy schemes. Next to that, the *Sejm* has to face the problem of low labour market participation. To get higher numbers, they have trying to introduce new family policies to increase the female labour market participation.

As Bjørnholt et al (2017) describe in their article, family policy can also affect the life of the Polish families. More gender-equal policies can promote paternal leaves and cause a shorter career brake for women. Their research investigated Polish families in Poland and in Norway. The findings show clear that women in Poland stay longer with their babies at home and men use paternity benefits fewer, then their peers in Norway. This also show the conservative ideologies behind the Polish family policies and makes clear that gender equality is not or just partially promoted by the family policy system.

There is a Polish-Swedish article from the Polish Sociological Review about masculinity and family policies. The article from Suwada and Plantin (2014) tries to find a link between masculinity, the definition of parental roles and family policy. Next to the punctual description of the comparative methods and the selection of the countries, this article also demonstrates the importance of ideas for family policy.

As the authors present, the Polish family policy system is “implicitly gendering”. Although the fathers are nowadays also involved in the system, it is noticeable that mothers are privileged. In many cases, the law speaks about maternity leave, which can transfer for the father. This type of family scheme is described as highly gendered according to Leitner (2003). Due to the many burden for fathers to achieve family policy schemes and on the contrary, due to the many burdens for women to be able to go back to the labour market as soon as possible, the system creates significant differences for people with different gender. These tiny nuances do not seem important at the first sight, but as it the core argument of

this research also shows, ideas are important factors for shaping family policy reforms and it is clear that behind the lack of gender-neutral terms and laws are conservative ideas. The research also shows that everyday beliefs about masculinity highly influence the behaviour of men about parental leave. While Swedish fathers see it as natural and as an important instrument to have a better connection with their own child, many Polish men still believe that staying at home with the child is something “feminine”. Suwada and Plantin (2014) describe positive changes in the system in Poland, but they highlight that lacking institutional willing, the expectations of traditional gender roles can slow down the process.

Due to the Family 500+ program, Poland implemented a comprehensive family policy reforms for its citizens. Although the opinion of the program is very positive inside the society, there are still challenges for the Polish families. Suwada (2019) presents the outputs of depth interviews with Polish families with small children by Statistics Poland. As the author also highlights, positive effects of the reforms are very welcomed because Poland is faced with low fertility rates. Unfortunately, the outputs of the interviews show that Family 500+ could not solve all the problems of families.

Although the financial situation of the families got better, the reform still do not help gender equality in the country and therefore, the women can go to work next to children just with serious efforts, but without a second salary, many families are not financially sustainable. Next to that, the answer shows that many Polish families wait for support with housing. The prices to rent or to buy a house or flat got very high in the last years, especially if it is comparable with the salaries and other social cash benefits. Therefore, Suwada (2019) points out that Poland needs to make a more comprehensive reform, which helps achieve improvements in questions, like housing, or gender equality.

As the previous articles showed, ideologies are important for the politics in both countries. As is clear from the article of Szikra in 2018, ideologies and symbols are important for the policy of the Hungarian government. She uses the term “post communistic traditionalism” [*poszt-kommunista tradicionalizmus*] which is a mix of traditional and conservative ideas and the old paths from the communistic era. She calls this type of politics as “*bricolage*” [*barkácsoló*] because it uses arbitrary ideas, the important aspect is that the output should somehow fit in the vision of the government. She argues that family policy is a perfect example for this type of politics. The Orbán government does not work based on expert opinions, it is based on ideas and symbols. The cause for this politics is not clear, but Szikra (2018) argues that the impact of ideas is clearly visible in the policy outputs.

Not just the traditional and conservative values are rising, as it was also mentioned earlier, illiberal values have also become important in Central East Europe's post-socialist countries. In the focus of this article is Hungary and Russia, but Poland, the Czech Republic and other CEE countries are also visible. Csillag and Szelényi (2015) writes about the rise of this neo-conservative ideology in Central East Europe and its effects on the politics of these countries. Next to the impacts of right-wing governments and conservative ideas, this work helped to understand the importance of concepts.

Pető and Grzebalska (2018) wrote an article about the recent political changes, namely about the "illiberal" transformation in Hungary and Poland. In their article, they investigate how gender politics has become an "enemy" for the Hungarian and Polish right-wing governments in the last years. In 2014, the Hungarian prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared the end of the hegemony of liberal democracy and the rise of an "illiberal" democracy in Hungary, but he forecasted this change for the whole of Europe in the next decades. His new system in Hungary is working since 2010. In Poland, the "illiberal" turn started in 2015, when the PiS party (in Polish: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; in English: Law and Justice) became the most influential political formation in Poland and got the majority both in parliament and government. The authors investigate many political changes from a gender view.

For the research project, this article contains two significant topics. At first, it shows also the recent family policy reforms of the countries and its effect and it shows the increasingly importance of familialism. Pető and Grzebalska (2018: 167) also shows that the Christian and conservative ideas became fundamental important for the family reforms in these countries. Besides that, this article deals a lot with a situation of women and show that gender equality is not, or just partially promoted at the new reform packages. In this work, the right party logic is also visible. With new tax systems and financing rules, the social stratification is low and do not try to eliminate the gaps between lower and higher social classes. The main argument of this article is that the "illiberal" parties, Fidesz (In Hungarian: Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége; in English: Alliance of Young Democrats) in Hungary and PiS in Poland use their politics against gender mainstreaming or against minorities and civil groups for legitimate their neo-liberal policies, which provides often less security for the society.

Gender seems to be an important factor in family policy. There is a nice gender-based article with a comparison between Hungary and Poland. the selection of this article is not accidental in this review, because it shows that the important role of gender and the European Union

in both countries. Velluti (2014) wrote her article about gender equality and about the gender regimes in Central-East European countries after the EU-accession.

Besides the information about the family policies, this article shows the importance of the time frame, which is investigated within a scientific work. Velluti (2014) writes about the time after the accession of the Central East European countries in 2004. As she argues, this starting point is highly important for her argument, because the new member states had to change many policies because of their accession to the EU. She shows that this occasion is an important time point. After this time, the new Member States had to start to reform their family policies into a more gender equal system.

Next to timing, Velluti (2014: 87-89) argues that there are significant differences between the family policy in Hungary and Poland. On one side, the paying out of the benefits differs a lot. The Hungarian system is much closer to the Scandinavian system, where the benefits are universal for every family, on the contrary, Poland has also means-tested elements in the system. Another difference is the access to the kindergartens. Velluti shows that Hungary is one of the leading member states for access to kindergartners, while Poland is one of the last. Although these evidences show some differences between the systems, Velluti also argues that there are more similarities than differences in the systems, as a opposite view than the argument of this thesis.

Velluti (2004) points out that it is always important to see the influence of the European Union in research about a Central European country. These countries started their integration to the union in the end of the 1990s. Differently than before, these countries had to achieve many goals and they had to synchronise their whole legal system fully with EU law. Earlier, it was also the case in the beginning of the 1990s at the time of the accession of Austria and Finland to the EU, but the differences were not high then in the case of the CEE (Central-East European) countries. Therefore, the CEE countries, such as Hungary and Poland started to write their laws EU compliant since the end of the 1990s. This influence is appreciably in both countries. Most of the time, these influences were on liberalising the economy, or strengthening the rule of law, but it has also its influences on family policy, such as gender equality, or rationalising and privatisation of state childcare institutions.

5. Analysis Process towards Solving the Research Problem

This research examines the outputs of family policy reforms in two Central East European countries, namely in Hungary and the Republic of Poland. Moreover, the research tries to explain, whether the selected factors shape the reforms into different directions. Furthermore, the thesis should make a research on the recent reform contents and their effects. To do this, the research should be based on evidence and clear concepts and arguments. The selected independent variables, such as conservative ideas and right-wing government influence should be able to explain the reform directions.

Therefore, the research should declare and precise the meaning of the variables and concepts. Firstly, it is important to determine and specify what a right-wing government policy means. To do this, it will be important to identify the most important characteristics of them. Besides that, it is necessary to see, what the definition of right-parties is. How can we define right party politics, what are the main criteria? Which policy-contents is right; basically, what right politics mean? The complexity of this task is that there is a significant change of party characteristics of the last decades. Not just in Central East Europe, but in the whole globe, the politics of the parties changed a lot. As Szabó (2011) discusses in his article, the FIDESZ party also changed a lot since its emergence in the end of the 1980s. Therefore, it is also important to discover the characteristics in a given time, because there are can be huge difference of the politics of the same party, as it can be seen, if we want to compare the politics of the first (1998-2002) and second Orbán (2010-2014) cabinets and there are the significant changes at the governing Polish PiS party.

Besides the previous issue, it is important to note that the thesis is based on a comparative structure. Therefore, it is not enough to investigate the reforms in the two countries independently; after the research process, the aggregated data should be ready for the comparison. At this stage, the most important task is to define the factors and characteristics, which can explain the similarities and differences between the family policy systems. As the work argues that the two systems have different outputs due to the selected factors, the focus will be on the determination of factors, where similarities can be observed.

5.1. Research Problem

The research project should address a scientific problem or question, which has to be answered at the end of the work. To do this, the researcher needs a clear topic and a clear scientific problem. Along the way to observation and data analysis the process can be difficult. At first, there should be a logical argument based on evidence and other scientific sources. To connect the argument between the researched phenomenon and the effecting variables, it is necessary to create concepts which can help to explain the argument. After that, operationalisation and the research method should be selected which presents the way how the data help to answer the problem. After these steps it is possible to observe and analyse the data. To give a scientific based answer, it is important to describe these techniques and the way of argument (Atteslander 2008) Before the start with the use of the selected research method, it will be necessary to operationalise the data. Operationalization means the observed data should be measurable. If this step works well, there will be a clear connection between the concept and the research method (Atteslander 2008) and it makes possible to answer the research question of the research, namely:

How do the governing right-wing parties and conservative ideas affect the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland between 2010 and 2019?

Do these affect the reform outputs in a similar or different way?

This thesis will measure the effects of conservative ideas and partisan politics. To do that, the reform content will be investigated under a specific view. Important factors will be, whether a reform supports gender equality, dual-breadwinner model, non-traditional family forms, father leave, part time-jobs, social class inequality, familialism, universal system, or the way of financing. Important is that the reforms should be investigated with the same structure from both countries, otherwise, it would be challenging to compare the data.

5.1.1. Dependent Variable

The thesis wants to explain the different family policy reform outputs between Hungary and Poland. To do that, this thesis investigates the reform content to get a better understanding in the following sub-policies, such as leave policies, gender and LGBTQ+ equality issues, family allowances, childcare facilities and special family tax schemes.

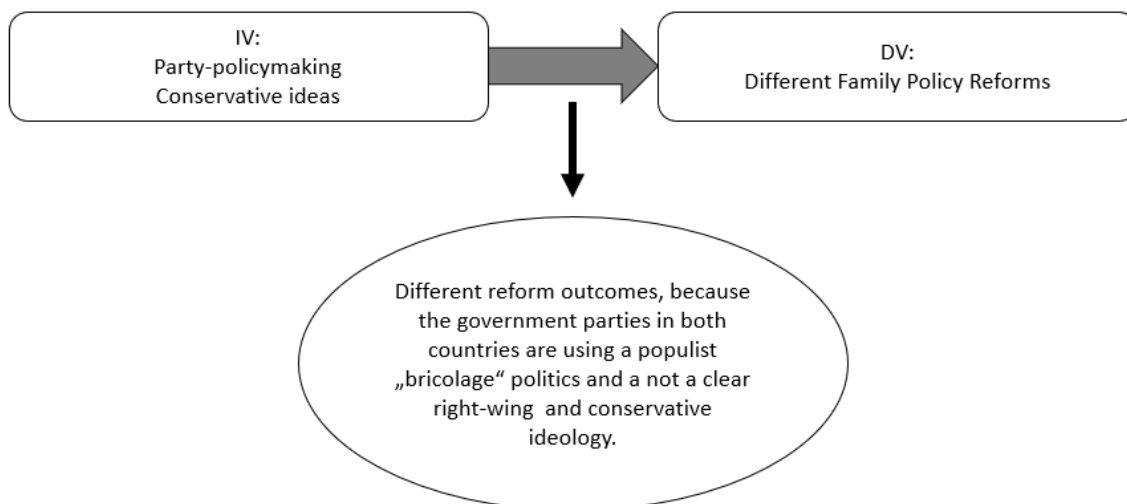
5.1.2. Independent Variables

To explain the independent variable, namely the party policy-making and conservative ideas, this research uses various aspects, which can explain the different effects. For this

purpose, the research examines whether the social policy reform outputs have neo-liberal, conservative elements, or it contains political heritages from the socialist times.

5.1.3. Causal Connection

As the following table shows, the causal connection between the dependent variable and the independent variables are the different policy contents and different family policy reform direction. Due to these differences, it is possible to explain the different outputs. to summarise, the different reform outputs are possible, because the governing parties are not using a clear right-wing policy, but much more a populist “bricolage” politics, where the parties use different ideological elements, such as neo-conservative economic policies, socialistic-paternalistic welfare schemes and conservative ideas.



1. Figure: Causal Connection.

5.2. Methodological approach

This research is based on delicately selected information and the objective is to examine the fine meanings and characteristics. Therefore, the thesis uses qualitative research method. As Atteslander (2008) writes, this makes possible to investigate deeper questions. There are many different types of methods to do qualitative research. Some of them use interviews, or field observations, other tries to find data from discourses (Khirfan, Peck, Mohtat 2020).

In this research, the main goal is to observe the family policy reform contents and the party-political programmes and the ideas derived from it. Therefore, the research uses political documents to generate scientific data for the answering of the research question. These documents are the most recent available party papers, official documents of the ministries for social affairs. Besides that, the new Hungarian ground law was used as a source. For the validation of the argument and causal connection, the thesis underlines the research with previous scientific secondary literature and scholars. Different views are very important for intersubjective outputs. Therefore, it is important to note that the selection of the scientific literature pays attention to not use only thesis from Hungarian and Polish sources to avoid not objective opinions. Therefore, a balanced international mix of secondary literature was used for the first part of the research project.

For the primary research of this work, different documents of the government, governing parties and governmental institutions will be used. The reason for the varying types of documents is that in Poland, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy publishes most of the official documents according to the family policy strategy of the country, while in Hungary, most of the official documents are written by external, but from the Ministry of Human Capacities dependent institutions, such as the National Institute for Family, Youth and Population Policy, or the Kopp Mária Institute for Demography and Families.

5.2.1. Content analysis

The collected data should be analysed to get scientific outputs at the end of the research. Therefore, an understandable, but also scientific way to use the data for answering the research issue is essential. The plan is to identify important reform contents, such as family allowance, parental leave, gender, and LGBTQ+ issues, leave policies and special tax schemes. These clusters will help for the analysis.

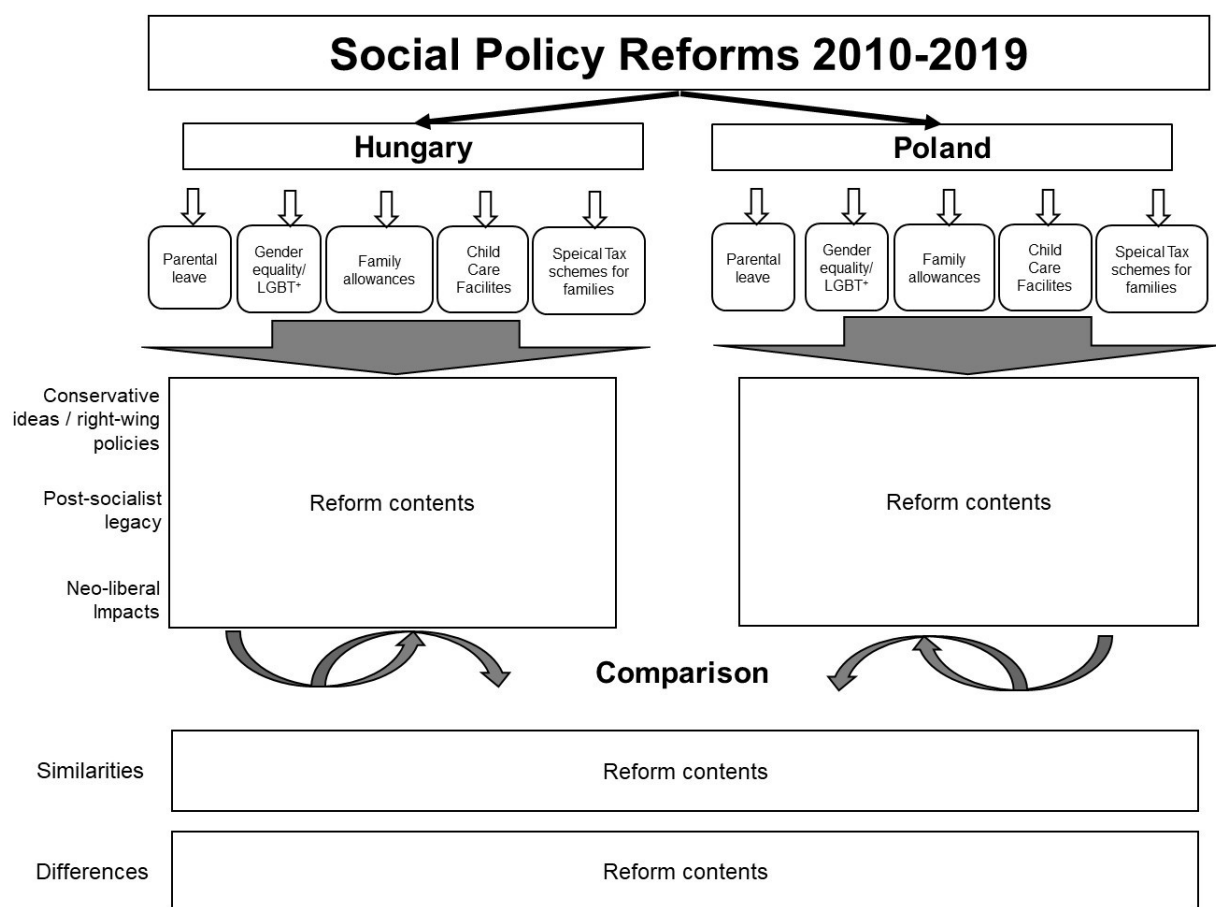
After the clusters were chosen, it should be noted, whether the reform contents are influenced by right-wing party ideologies and conservative ideas. After identifying the influences, a country summary is possible, and the thesis can describe and write about the influences in Hungary and Poland separately.

The last stage will contain the comparison, where the comparison of the outputs from the countries are visible and discusses, whether the reform contents are different or the same, due to the ideological influences. To summarize the research plan, here is a small graphic about my data analysis plan and a more detailed table about the analysis process.



2. Figure: Analysis Process.

The time frame of the research is 10 years. During these years, there are many documents which can give much information about the reform path of family policies in Hungary and Poland. Therefore, my focus is on comprehensive documents, which give an overview about the strategy and ideas of the reforms and which are not just a collection of the details of the specific family policy changes.



3. Figure: Methodological Overview.

Due to the comparative characteristic of the thesis, it was important to find documents with similar contents from the countries, such as the party programs of the ruling political formations, middle and long-term strategies of social policy, or comprehensive information materials, which give information also about the patterns and the background ideas of the reforms. In the case of strategies, it was possible, but sometimes, I use special documents from the countries, such as the constitution of Hungary from 2011, or the collection of promises of the PiS party for the elections in 2019 in Poland (European Election Database). The reason is that there was sometimes no similar document available. As an example, the ruling Hungarian parties, the FIDESZ and KDNP did not update their government programs since the elections in 2010.

During the data selection, the translation of the documents was an important part of the research. Many documents are available just in the national languages of the selected countries. The author speaks Hungarian, but not Polish, therefore, trustworthy translations were essential for the further steps. Despite the language barrier, it was a necessary decision to work with Polish documents, because they can give a more precise overview about the reform paths and ideas in Poland and gave valuable and useful information about the Polish family policy system. To get precise translations, the Polish documents were translated by a Polish-speaking person.

The classification whether the reform contents contain conservative/right-wing policies, neo-liberal legacies or heritages from the socialist time is based on the previously discussed researches about conservative and socialistic policies. As Csaba (2019), Csillag and Szelényi (2015), Hašková and Saxonberg (2016) and Inglot (2018) writes the socialist legacies are visible in reform contents where the policies can be seen as universal systems, where every citizen has the right to the benefits regardless of their social status or welfare. These benefits have the character of state-based system, where the values and ideas of the government highly influence the policies, such as in the cases of gendered policies. The neo-liberal impacts are characterized by Szikra (2018), Kingdon 1984), Csillag and Szelényi (2015) and Korys (1999) where market-based capitalist solutions are dominating in the reform contents. This type of reforms contains liberal values and based on the own responsibilities of the citizens. Good example is the market-based elements in the housing policies in Hungary, or the promotion of part-time and atypical working contracts in both countries. The conservative and right-wing policies are derived from the researches of Gibson (1996), Gwiazda (2020), Szikra (2018) and Kurkut, Eslen-Ziya (2011). These

policies have in common that conservative ideas play an important role. Next to that, the main direction is towards middle-class families, who already have some capitals to use the benefits of the state-based schemes. Adequate examples are here the different retirement ages for women and men, or the tax discounts for married couples.

On the next tables, there is an overview about the sources, which are used during the analysis of the data. The first table will show the Hungarian sources, the second the Polish documents. Both tables show the original name of the document in the published language and their English translation, the year of publishing and a short description.

Hungary:

1. Table: Hungarian Documents.

| Name of the source | Year of Publishing | Short description |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Magyarország Alaptörvénye The Fundamental Law of Hungary (constitution) | 2011 | The Fundamental Law of Hungary which was exclusively written by the current Hungarian government parties in 2011 and has many effects on social policies. |
| Nemzeti Ügyek Politikája Politics of National Affairs | 2010 | The government program of the Fidesz-KDNP coalition from 2010. For the elections in 2014 and 2018, there was no government program published. |
| Családbarát Fordulat 2010-2018. Family-friendly turnaround 2010-2018. | 2017 | The official document of the Ministry of Human Capacities about the strategies and reform plans for family policies. |

Poland:

2. Table: Polish Documents. Own Description.

| Name of the source | Year of Publishing | Short description |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Rodzina 500+ Family 500+ | 2015 | An official paper of the Ministry of Social Policy and Families about the Family 500+ program and its patterns. |
| Rodzina najlepszą inwestycją. Family is the best investment | 2017 | A comprehensive document on family policy and its goals for the future from the governing Polish party. |
| Program: Zdrowie Rodzina Praca Prawa I Sprawiedliwości 2019 Program: Health Family Work; Law and Justice 2019 | 2019 | The program of the PiS party in 2019 before the elections. |

5.2.2. Research Steps of Content Analysis

The previous paragraphs already showed the main process of the data analysis of this research project. Still, the detailed description is needed to create an intersubjective and transparent research plan. Therefore, the steps for conduction is crucial for the methodology part (White, Marsh 2006).

Content analysis is a tool for social and political sciences which use the meanings, presence and frequency of words, concepts, or ideas. The data for this type of researches are based on qualitative data, such as texts, or audio data (Berelson 1952). After a systematic research of the research data, the researcher will be able to understand hidden messages and meanings, therefore, it is a useful way for generating new findings. For a successful analysis, the used data, in this case the used texts should be analysed with the support of generated codes (Erlingsson, Brysiewicz 2017). Once these codes are ready and the data is selected, the codes can conduct into code categories and afterwards, the findings can be presented. Therefore, as also Khirfan, Peck and Mohtat (2020) highlights, content analysis can be seen as a scientific technique to understand special characteristics and meanings of texts and making a systematically and later scientific trackable way of research.

For the use of content analysis, many characteristics of the own research should be described. Firstly, it is important to set clear goals and intentions, what kind of research outputs should come out at the end. In this case, the objectives were discussed in the previous sub-chapter. Besides that, the selection of the resources was also set (Berelson 1957; White, Marsh 2006).

Afterwards, the analysis can start. This research uses the way of relational analysis, where not just the existence and frequency of the concepts, but also their importance and relations to each other plays an important role. Afterwards, a so-called cognitive mapping is needed. In this stage, the research documents were already seen. Therefore, the texts help to create the concepts for the analysis. This step works also as a pre-test and help to define the most usable concepts and concept groups (White, Marsh 2006; Erlingsson, Brysiewicz 2017). After these stages, this research created the following concepts for the research analysis.

- Social Policy
- Family Policy
- Family
- Parental Leave policies
- Childcare Allowance
- Tax benefit
- Gender
- Childcare facilities

After the analysis of the text sources according to the codes, the diverse cluster were grouped into concept groups. These concept groups contain the spine of the research description. These concept groups can differ from the earlier used codes. Important is that these new clusters have to be ready for the final narration of the findings (White, Marsh 2006; Erlingsson, Brysiewicz 2017). At this stage, there were created the following concept groups for the research:

- Parental leave
- Gender equality /LGBTQ⁺
- Family allowances
- Child-care facilities
- Tax benefits for families

After creating these methodological settings, the following steps are needed to finish the analysis. The following steps are based on the principles of the Columbia Public Health Institution (2020).

1. *Analysis of the codes and put them into the diverse concept groups.*
2. *Analysis of the meaning and the effects of the concept groups.*
3. *Analysis, whether the concept groups have effects on each other, because sometimes the clusters are not clear. It is also the case in this thesis; therefore, the presentation of the findings has to deal with this issue.*
4. *Presentation of the findings. A systematically, comprehensible and transparent listing with explanations (Columbia Public Health 2020).*

In the case of this research, the steps can be summarized as following:

1. Selection of the documents for content analysis.
2. Creating the concepts and concepts groups.
3. Selecting the important information from the text and put them in clusters based on the previously created concept groups.
4. Analysing which social policy field is affected by the reform content.
5. Investigate, which political forces are behind the reforms.
6. Compare the data of the selected countries and write a comparison about the findings.

5.3. Comparative Design

In the social sciences, especially in the political sciences, comparative research designs have a great importance. In case of comparative methods, the researchers using more than one case to see whether countries, regions, times, or policy schemes are the same or different. Per definition, at first, comparative studies were comparing different countries and their political institutions, processes, and policies. Nowadays, the comparative studies are widely used on political researches and next to country comparisons, single cases, or sub-national entities are also often discussed.

As Lijphart (1971) highlights, a comparative design is more a methodological process for the research, then a substantive focus. It is important to note that mostly in the Anglo-Saxon

countries, the term comparative politics is often used exceptionally for comparing the own country and the politics of foreign countries, while in Europe, the term mostly is mostly understand as comparison between different cases, times and countries. As an example, this research project also deals with two different Central East European countries, where none of the countries are the basic country. Both cases are equal for the comparison. (Lijphart 1971).

As already mentioned, comparative view does not have a single comparative research design. On the contrary, as Mershon, Walsh (2016) writes, a broad number of research designs, such as content analysis, discourse analysis, case studies; in general, many qualitative and quantitative methods are practicable for the researchers. The crucial point is to use the comparative view and methodology during the research. It has an importance at the selection of data, but the most important comparative part comes after the data procession. The final aggregated data should be analysed with a systematic comparative system. there are different methods for comparing, such as the method of agreement or similarity, the method of difference (Mill 1834).

John Stuart Mill (1834) published his book in 1834 about the system of logic. In his work, the author discussed the issues of causal relationships in social sciences. His most similar system design method and most different system design are still in use and they give also the ground for this research. The whole research design and the analysis of the data will be used according to his systematically approach. His most different system design describes very different cases, where the dependent variables are the same. His most similar system design describes similar cases, where only the dependent variables are differing, but the independent variables are comparable the same. In the case of this research, the second method is acceptable due to the reasons which were discussed in the last chapters (Lijphart 1971; Keman 2014).

5.3.1. Most Similar Systems Design

According to Przeworski and Teune (1970) Mill's most similar method design or method of difference (MSSD) describes objects, cases, or cases which are similar as possible, due to their historical development, culture similarities or same political systems and ideas. The main reason for using this type of design is to keep as much variable's constant as possible. Although this is the main shortcoming the method because there will be no case where all the variables are the same, it is still a very important useful approach for comparatively same cases (Anckar 2008; Lijphart 1971).

Although it gives limits for the research, it can still give valuable information about a single research goal, such as about the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland. Due to the shortcomings of this according to Anckar (2008), the parallel method of Mill's different design is often used next to the MSSD method. Although such a mixed method can give a better understanding of a broader topic, the usage of such mixed method is problematical. Therefore, according to Przeworski, Adam & Teune (1970), this research also exclusively uses the most similar system design, although the other method would also give important information. To summarize, comparisons are never natural. Kennett (2006) and Keman (2014) underlines, comparisons are constructed by the researcher; therefore, it cannot give a full picture about the compared cases, but still, it can reflect and show many important outputs. Therefore, the choose of the system should base on the fact, which design fits most to the research.

The explanation for using the most similar system design for this research is following. During this comparison, two relative similar countries are compared. Both countries have right-wing governments with conservative-autocratic policies. Therefore, for the first sight, we could expect similar policy outputs. On the contrary, as the scientific researches showed that the family policy of the countries were different due to the different historical developments and the politics of the current politics also pushes politics in a different direction. Therefore, although there are many similarities, the argument is that the different outputs of the party politics will result different policy outputs.

5.4. Case Selection

It is important to underline the selection of the two countries. As Gerring (2008) writes, case selection can be also accidental, but in this case, there is a high potential that the selected cases will not work for the research well. Therefore, it is important to examine, whether the countries are suitable for the comparison, moreover, which method will be logical to do the comparison. There are different ways to do it, in the case of this research; the plan is to use the most similar system design, because at this research, the comparison contains same contexts but the argument is that there is a different causal effect at the cases.

As it was also mentioned earlier, this thesis conducts with two Middle East European countries. At the first sight, these countries look similar, due to their close geographical position and historical-religious situation. Nevertheless, it is clear after a short research that there more also many differences between the family policy systems of the countries. As

Fenger (2007) writes, there are more differences than similarities between the East Central European welfare states. Therefore, it is a perfect case for comparison. It has multiple reasons. Firstly, although there are significant differences, the structure of Hungary and Poland are similar, therefore, it is easy to compare the two countries. As the researches show, the status of family policy in the countries were quite different, the similarities were based on the Soviet influence, but in the last years, two comparable political formations are leading the countries, which may cause same reform paths, although the main argument is that they are producing different policy outputs. The investigation of these processes gives a possibility for comparing the policies.

6. Analysis on Family Policy Reforms in Hungary and Poland

The following chapter presents the findings of the content analysis. To do that, the findings will be introduced in a comprehensive and transparent way. Before comparing, the data in Hungary and Poland, the data will be presented separately. Therefore, this chapter has two subchapters for the Hungarian and Polish family policy reforms.

Firstly, the aggregated reform contents will be presented in a list with the terms in English and in the national language. Afterwards, the detailed explanations follow according to the earlier defined concept groups. As it was already mentioned, the grouping of the reform packages must deal with the issue that a single reform package can affect more than one cluster at the same time. Therefore, the presentation will be as follows: the reform contents will be presented in the cluster where its effects are the most important, while at the end, a summary table will show all the clusters, where each reform packages have their effects.

6.1. Family Policy Reforms in Hungary

For the analysis of the Hungarian reform contents, the thesis uses three main documents. The first analysed document is the Hungarian ground law from 2012. Until then, the country used its old constitution from the Second socialistic republic with major changes. Still, the new right-wing government wanted to write a new document, which can present more the values of the third republic. Although this document does not seem like an important document for analysing the family policy reforms of a country, the new passages of this ground law implemented important new orders, which effects the family policy goals and reforms crucially.

The second document for the analysis is the government program of the Fidesz-KDNP coalition from the year 2010. Although this document is from 2010 and it is not actual anymore, the governing parties did not publish more recent party documents since that time. Both in 2014 and in 2018, their slogan was, we continue our work, and they did not see the necessity for writing new programs. Therefore, this document was analysed as the most recent document from the governing parties. This document does not contain so many details about the single reforms, but it contains a comprehensive summary about the frameworks of the desired family policy setting in Hungary. Therefore, this document delivers important information about the strategy, ideology and goals for the family policy reforms in Hungary for the last decade.

The third document was written by the Ministry of Human Capacities and its dependent institutes for social and family policies. The document Family-Friendly Turnaround 2010-2018 is a comprehensive document about every single reform content which were implemented or were in implementation in the various social policy fields in Hungary. Therefore, it gives a wide-ranging overview not only about the family policies, but also about the related policy fields, such as pension policy, labour market policy, or disability policy. Therefore, the findings can contain also reform packages which are not basically mentioned as family policy tools, still they have important effect on this field.

The following table shows the findings of the research. It contains a listing of all the significant reforms of the last decade.

3. Table: Hungarian Reform Contents.

| Reform content | |
|---|---|
| English equivalents | Hungarian terms |
| New terminology for marriage and family | A házasság és család új fogalma |
| Younger generations must take care of their older relatives | Az ifjabb generációk kötelesek idősebb rokonaikat ápolni |
| Subsidies for homemaking, housing (CSOK) | Családi Otthonteremtési Kedvezmény (CSOK) |
| “Women 40” retirement for women after 40 years on the labour market | „Nők 40” a nők negyven év munkaviszony után nyugdíjba vonulhatnak |
| Family tax benefit | Családi adókedvezmény |
| Obligatory kindergarten for children | Kötelező óvoda gyermekeknek |
| Support for big families paying loans | Kedvezményes hiteltörlesztés nagycsaládosoknak |
| “Academic” childcare benefit | “Diplomás” gyes |
| Baby bond | Babakötvény |
| Reducing student loans | Diákhitelek csökkentése |
| Discount for newly married couples | Adókedvezmény első házasoknak |
| Promoting flexible working contracts especially for women | A flexibilis munkaszerződések támogatása különösen nők esetében |
| Increased involvement of fathers in child-rearing | Az apák megnövelt bevonása a gyermeknevelésbe |
| Schoolbooks free of charge for every family | Ingyen tankönyv minden családnak |
| Free meals for children in school and during holidays | Ingyen étkeztetés gyermekeknek az iskolában és szünidőben |
| Childcare allowance for three years again | Gyes újra három éves korig |
| Sources: Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018; Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010. | |

6.1.1. Parental Leave Schemes

According to the Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma (2017), Hungary implemented an old-age pension system, where they can retire after 40 years of labour market contract. This means that every woman, regardless of their age can retire after 40 years of employment, when they stop to work. As a further benefit, Pónusz et.al. (2018) describes the eligibility period was set as follows: next to employment, the following periods are also count to the 40 years: the time of maternity allowance, childcare allowance, child-raising allowance and care allowance after a hardly disabled own or adopted child. Although, the time with employment should also reach these cases 32 years. Vida (2019) writes that when these requirements are fulfilled for women, the old-age pension can be approved for her, without any other confirmation or health examination and the woman is also not required to be part of the child rearing of her existing grandchildren, although the political communication sees it as the main advantage of this system.

The Hungarian family allowance system for children between the birth and three years is one of the oldest in the world and the oldest working system in the ex-socialist Central East European countries (Kamerman, Moss 2009). The duration of the children's allowance was changed many times during the time. In 2010, as an effect of the economic crisis in 2007 and 2008, the family allowance was shortened for two years (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017). In 2012, the second Orbán cabinet changed the duration again (Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010), and since this time, the families can use this benefit form until the third birthday of their children. Next to the family allowance, the parent can work up to 30 hours per week according to Vida (2019), although this restriction is not available for children with disabilities and in the case of home office. As a new possibility, adopting parents can use family allowance for 6 months if the adopted child is older than three years old, but younger than ten years old (Pónusz et.al. 2018)

6.1.2. Gender Equality / LGBTQ+

The new common law in Hungary (Hungarian Parliament 2018) has many changes in comparing to the old constitution. Next to the new name for the country and the declaration of Hungary as a catholic country, the basic law also contains family policy relevant paragraphs. First of all, in the old constitution, the term marriage was gender neutral. It does not mean that marriage was open for every couple regardless of their gender, but there was no burden for implementing a new law for opening marriage for same-gender couples. The new common law changed the status quo. The new term in the document describe marriage

as a bond between men and women. Therefore, there is no more legal chance for marriage equality in Hungary, unless the common law will be changed. Although it is not impossible, there is a little chance of that, because the current government has 2/3 majority in the Hungarian parliament and this majority is needed for a change in common law. Therefore, many same-gender couples do not have the right to marry in the country which also means that they cannot adopt a child, or rear a child as a legally recognised family together.

As Szikra (2018) also shows, a stronger bond within the families was also an important role for the new common law. Therefore, not just the protection of the families and their importance was written, but the common law also has a sentence, which speaks about the duties of the younger generations. As the sentence says, adult children are required to care for their parents in need. This sentence can be noted as a protection for the Hungarian state. Poverty, illness and other problems at the older generations are often visible. Because of this, senior citizens often need external help to maintain their standard of living. In the individualised Hungarian society, many people would think at first on the responsibility of the state, with pensions, elderly homes, and other supports for this social group. Meanwhile, this sentence means that the responsibility for the elderly is mainly at the own children and stays in the family, where the state should not intervene, just in very problematical cases. Although the command of the common law seems very clear, the reality shows that the case is not as simple. It should be noted that it does mean that the children must take care their parents in every situations, but still, this command is a clear signal for a family policy system, where the family has more responsibility than the state (Hungarian Parliament 2018).

6.1.3. Family Allowances

Family Allowances are an important support for the young adults. Although the amount of the allowance is also dependent from the previous incomes from work. Therefore, the Hungarian government tries to support younger mothers, who did not have any or just a few months employment history, because they are studying at the time of the pregnancy and the birth of their baby Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010. For these mothers, there is a special form of family allowance, namely the “academic” family allowance, or *diplomás gyed* in Hungarian. The eligibility for this type of benefit is very well-structured, there are many requirements. Firstly, the mother should not be eligible for the “normal child allowance” due to the lack of working insurance. Secondly, the mother should be enrolled in a Hungarian state-recognised tertiary education institution within two years prior to the birth of the child. Thirdly, the child should be born during the time of the student status of the mother or latest one

year after the end of the studies. Fourth, the new-born should live with the mother and the mother should have an EU or Hungarian citizenship and the mother should have a registered residence in the territory of Hungary at the time of the child's birth. As Vida (2019) makes it clear, this benefit is also open before fathers, but just in special cases, when the mother has died or does not meet any of the previous requirements. Therefore, this benefit is accessible almost only for women. The academic child allowance is transferred until the second birthday of the child and the amount is 161,000 HUF for bachelor and master students and 210,600 HUF for doctoral candidates (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

6.1.4. Childcare Facilities

The reason for the implementation of obligatory kindergarten according to the *Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma* (2017) (Ministry of Human Capacities) is to start the socialisation for the children already at a young age, which can be a big support for children with neglected family background. Since 2015, every parent is required to send their children to kindergarten from the age of three. Earlier, the obligatory kindergarten started from 5 years. The intention to support for disadvantaged children come is in every document visible. Moreover, it is not just a support for the children. It also means that the parents have more time to go back to the labour market or do the house works without their children. Besides that, the children get free meals in the kindergarten, which sadly is not the case in every family (Vida 2019).

Although there is an obligatory kindergarten duty for the families, crèches are optional institutions for families with young children. Still, due to the increasing female labour market participation, more and more families want to have place in a crèche to solve the childcare problem, during their worktime (Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010). Although there are more examples for new institutions, there is still a lack of childcare places in the country. This is one the main reason for promoting flexible-working contracts especially for women in Hungary, because it can give the opportunity for families to solve their childcare issues at home without the use of a childcare institution. Therefore, the government tries to encourage the Hungarian employers to use flexible working hours and part-time contracts in the case of young parents. The task is difficult, because also as an effect of the socialist heritage, in Hungary, flexible working hours and part-time jobs are not as common as in many Western-European countries (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

Childrearing has many costs for the parents. It is extra the case if the children started to go to school. The costs for pens, exercise books and schoolbags can mean a serious challenge

for many families. Therefore, the government implemented a program for pupils. The scheme contains free access to schoolbooks for every child regardless of the family's financial background. This scheme is a clear universal program. Every child has the right to get the schoolbooks free of charge, there is no need for application (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Vida 2019). Although the program seems as entirely positive, there are many negative feedbacks from the teachers, parents and politicians from the oppositions. The reason is that the free schoolbook program was implemented together with the elimination of the old Polipol schoolbook market. Since the beginning of the program, most of the books are published by state-owned schoolbook companies and the schools should choose these books in the schools. The negative opinions highlight that the new state-schoolbooks have often many errors and their contents are often influenced by the views and ideologies of the governing parties (Laki 2017).

Next to free schoolbooks, (Vida 2019) writes that the government also implemented a program for the pupils and for kindergarten children, where the children have access to free meals in the kindergarten and in the lower classes of primary schools. The main reason for this program is that poverty is a big issue especially for families because of their higher costs due to their children. Therefore, and due to the existence of many poor families, many children cannot have proper meals at home and their only chance to get healthy and enough food is to go to one of the childcare institutions. The program works also during the school holidays and it tries to help children with poor family backgrounds by giving them at least one proper meal a day (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

6.1.5. Special Tax Schemes for Families

Housing is a serious issue for many young families. Due to the high prices, it is not easy for the young adults to find an appropriate flat or house. Therefore, the Hungarian government implemented a housing scheme (CSOK). The name means Family Home Allowance in English and it is a non-refundable grant, when a family would like to buy a new home or flat, or they would like to extend their already existing home. Pónusz et.al. (2018) investigated the benefit is accessible for ever registered partners and married couples if they live in the same household and they rear their child or children together. The benefit is accessible not only after having children, but it is also possible to get the benefit before the birth of the child. In this case, the families should get the committed child in the next few years, otherwise they should pay the benefit back. The benefit is also possible at adopted children. The amount of the discount varies due to the number of the children and the planned investment in

housing. In the case of buying a new flat or building a new house, families with one child can get 600,000 HUF, with two children 2,600,000 HUF and for three or more children, the benefit is 10,000,000 HUF. In the case of buying a used flat or house or at an extension of the own home, the amounts are following. For one child, the families get 600,000 HUF, for two children 1,430,000 HUF, for three children 2,200,000 HUF and for four or more children the amount reach 2,750,000 HUF. The application for this benefit is available at most of the banks and credit institutions which have a contract with the Hungarian State Treasury (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Vida 2019).

Family tax benefit, or in Hungarian family discount is a form of tax benefit for families in Hungary. The main goal of this scheme is to provide a discount on the personal income tax. The family tax benefit reduces the consolidated tax base of the family (Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010). The amount of the benefit is dependent of various requirements, such as the number of children, the access to family allowance and the number of the family members who live in the same household. In overall, the amount is dependent of the number of the children. In the case of one child, the families can save 66.670 HUF in a month; 133,330 HUF can get families with two children and for families with three or more children are entitled for 220,000 HUF. The benefit is open for every family, who has one or more children who live in the same household as their parent(s). If the personal income tax is lower than the family tax benefit, the beneficiaries have the right and possibility to get 15% as a contribution discount from the difference (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Pónusz et.al. 2018).

Another tax support for families can be noted as the support in case of mortgage debts. After Pónusz et.al. (2018), in these cases, the families can get a partial debt relief if they have one or more children in the same household. The most important requirement is that the family must live in Hungary and the debt should be also at a Hungarian credit institution. The amount of debt relief is dependent from the number of the children in the families. In 2019, the amount of the tax benefit was in the following sum. At the case of one child, there is now possibility to get a relief. In the case of two children, the amount is 1,000,000 HUF. In the case of three or more children, the amount is 4,000,000 HUF and the amount can be extended with 1,000,000 HUF after each additionally child. The only possible use of the benefit is to reduce the housing mortgage. The benefit is available after blood and adopted children. The benefit can be delivered just once and for one home mortgage. The benefit is open for every family where the children were born after July 1st, 2019 (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

Children can be seen as the most valuable investment in the future. Although, financial investments are also important to secure the future of families and young adults. Therefore, a baby bond program was implemented which gives the parents the possibility to save money for their children until they grow up and reach adulthood (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010). Every child with a Hungarian residence and citizenship are entitled for a start-up bond after 2015. The amount of this cash benefit reaches 42,500 HUF. After that, the parents, but also other relatives are entitled to save money on this state-secured and supported bond until the 18th birthday of a child. The main advantage of this system is that this baby bond and its account have very good interest rates. Additionally, to the savings of the parents, the state gives additionally 10% of the capital, which cannot be higher than 6,000 HUF in a year. If the family of the baby is entitled for one kind of family allowance scheme, the additional state payment can be even higher. At the end, the accumulated amount can be used freely by the child (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Pónusz et.al. 2018; Vida 2019).

In the Hungarian university system, not every student can study without tuition fees (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017). Therefore, and because of the other costs, many students use the possibility of a student loan. Since 2018, there is also a benefit system for mothers with children. The main goal of the benefit is to encourage childbearing already in the young ages. Therefore, mother with one or more children can get important support if they have a student loan. Already with one child, the student loan can be suspended after the birth of the first child. The suspension is for three years, during this time period the mothers should not pay any rates and no interests, and they should start to pay back their student loans after the end of this three-year period. In the case of two children, the mother has an extra bonus besides loan suspension. 50% of the student loan will be cancelled, the mother should pay back just the half amount of the debt. This bonus will be even more in the case of three children. In this situation, the mother can stop paying her debt back. The state will forgive her full debt. Officially, this benefit is also open for fathers, but due to the requirements, until now, it was not possible for father to use this benefit system (Pónusz et.al. 2018).

Marriage is an important institution for the Hungarian government. It is visible in many benefit schemes in family policy, but there is one particular benefit scheme, which is dependent from marriage. It is the tax discount for first marriage couples. As the name says, this benefit schemes are open for fresh married coupled, but also for registered partners, there is no difference in this case. The only requirement is that it should be the first marriage for one of

the people in the marriage or in the registered partnership. Otherwise, everybody can access this benefit form, regardless of gender or age. Although, it is important to note that the couples can only benefit from the scheme, if they have a working contract. The reason is that this benefit is a tax benefit. It is a discount from the personal income tax. Therefore, couples without personal income tax cannot enjoy the benefit. The amount of the discount is 5,000 HUF and the duration are for 24 months. It means that the couples can save up to 220,000 HUF within the two years. The benefit is mainly for young couples, but families with children and other family tax benefits are also not excluded (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Pónusz et.al. 2018).

6.2. Family Policy Reforms in the Republic of Poland

For the analysis of the Polish reform contents, the thesis also uses three main documents for the presentation of the analysis results. As in the case of Hungary, during the selection of these documents, it was important to find comprehensive documents about the separate family policy reform packages. Besides that, the party program of the governing PiS party is also contained, because the content of that document can highlight the party-policy interests. At the analysis of documents should be mentioned that also a fourth document was used frequently, namely a policy document of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy from 2016. This document shows the details about the single reforms, which are sometimes not written in the three analysed documents. Therefore, it works as an extra source, which helps for the describing all important information about the reform contents.

The first Polish document analysed is titled as Rodzina 500+, which means Family 500+ in English. This document delivers a comprehensive and detailed presentation about the most important pillar of the Polish family policy reforms. Although this document deals mainly only with this one particular program, its information is still very important for the analysis, because the understanding of the Family 500+ program is crucial for the understanding of the whole reform. The reason for that is that most of the other programs are dependent from the Family 500+ program or they work as an extension for this one reform package. the document was published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which makes sure that the presentation of the data is objective and does not reflect the views and interest of the governing party.

The second document is a very comparable document which was analysed from the Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities. the document Rodzina najlepszą inwestycją, or in

English Family is the best investment, the authors describe the already implemented schemes for family policies and also gives an overview about the future plans of the Polish government. Although this document can be noted also as being a more technical document, the explanations in the texts also contain much information about the strategies and political ideas of the research packages. Therefore, it is a crucial document for the analysis, because it contains all the important reform contents, moreover, it also shows a wide-broad picture about the family policy reforms in Poland.

Not as in Hungary, the Polish government party PiS publishes new party documents frequently. Because of that, the analysis uses the latest comprehensive party program of the PiS party from 2019. Due to the relatively young document, the analysis can use this paper as a control document, because it lists all the achieved family policy reforms from the last decade proudly. Next to that, it also gives some information for the plans for the future. Besides that, the ideologies, thoughts, and strategies behind the reforms are also well discussed. Therefore, this document delivers not only information about the reform contents, but also about strategy and ideas of the governing party. Moreover, the document makes clear that the Polish government sees the Hungarian reforms in the social policy fields as an idol, which delivers important information for the comparison.

4. Table: Polish Reform Contents.

| Reform content | |
|---|---|
| English equivalence | Polish terms |
| “Toddler+” Program | Maluch+ Program |
| Lower Retirement age:60 for women, 65 for men | Przywrócenie wieku emerytalnego |
| Mama 4 Plus | Mama 4 plus |
| Apartment+ | Mieszkanie+ |
| “Closing biological sex gap” | Zamknięcie naturalne różnice płciowe |
| Family friendly environment regardless of gender | Środowisko przyjazne rodzinie bez względu na płeć |
| New organisational standards for pregnant women in health care | Wszystkie leki, których potrzebują w ciąży będą bezpłatne |
| Family 500+ Program | Rodzina 500+ Program |
| Family 500 Program | Rodzina 500 Program |
| Behind Life Program | Program Za życiem |
| The Big family Card (KDR) | Karta Dużej Rodziny |
| Obligatory pre-school rearing from 6 years | Rozszerzono edukację przedszkolną |
| Higher Child benefit | Wyższy zasiłek na dziecko |
| PLN for PLN system | Złotówki za złotówkę system |
| Sources: Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019. | |

6.2.1. Parental Leave Schemes

The life with children with disabilities can cause extra burdens and challenges for the parents. Therefore, the Polish government implemented a very comprehensive program for families with disabled children (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017). The Behind Life program can be seen mainly as a leave scheme, because the most important goal of the program is to provide every support for the families to stay at home with their children with disabilities. To do that, the program has many different pillars, which also effects other clusters, such as taxes, or family allowances. The most important pillars of the program are the financial support for the baby during the pregnancy and after birth; early support assistance for the development of the child; access to rehabilitation and care services; and providing assistance and specialists for the families if there are questions or problems with the children (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016).

6.2.2. Gender Equality / LGBTQ+

Due to the ageing society, most of the European countries are forcing the citizens to go to retire close to 70 years old (Szikra 2018). Overall, the trends are always higher retirement ages for the old-age pension. On the contrary, the Polish government restored the previous lower retirement age in Poland. The new ages are 60 for women and 65 for men (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016). This distinguishing between gender is also an always less used method in Europe, but Poland, and also Hungary follow here a different path. The intention of the government is to give back the freedom of the older citizens whether they would like to retire, even with a lower pension rate, or stay longer on the labour market, although, the government also implemented increasing pension in the last years. The explanation for the different retirement age for men and women is the following: the government would like to acknowledge the hard and important work of women and especially mothers with these five years bonus. At the same time, the hope of the government is that these younger pension receiver women will be acting in the duties with their grandchildren. A clear sign to a conservative gender role, where men are seen as the breadwinner and women as the caregiver in the family, who mainly do the work around a child (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Gender pay gap, or as the Polish governing party calls “Biological sex gaps” are also a serious issue on the Polish labour market (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017). Although the gap is not as high as in many conservative West-European welfare states, still, it is an issue for many women on the Polish labour market. Therefore, the Polish government tries

to eliminate this gap, because they do not think that there should be any kind of pay gap between the “biological sexes”. To do this, they try to go as a pioneer in the state-owned companies and pay attention to the same amount of wages for every employee. The Polish government sees it as an important issue, because they would also like to motivate women to be more active on the labour market, because it is one of the key factors for higher economic growth of the Polish economy (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Not just gender pay gap, the reconciliation between work and family seems also as an issue for many Polish employees. Therefore, just like in Hungary, the Polish governments encourages companies and employers to create a more family friendly environment regardless of gender, where mothers and fathers can be more flexible (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017). An important pillar of this reform is the promotion of home office, flexible working hours and part-time jobs mostly for women. The goal is to achieve a situation for the parents, where they should not have chosen between children and career. Therefore, it must be a win-win situation for everybody: the fertility rates, but also the labour market participation should start to increase due to these actions (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

To acknowledge the unpaid and invisible work of women and for the secure of the Polish mothers, the Polish government implements programs already for pregnant women. Therefore, since 2018, the Polish pregnant women can use all the medications they need during the pregnancy for free. According to the PiS party, this “revolutionary” benefit scheme should support the pregnant women to have less fear due to financial problems during the pregnancy and it is also a good way to give the best chance for the new born babies to get every important medical services already before they got born (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019)

6.2.3. Family Allowances

The Big Family Card is mainly a system with discounts for bigger families in Poland. The main goal behind the system is to give additional allowances and discounts for Polish families with three or more children (Ministretstwo Rodziny 2016). These benefits for the families are available at most of the public institutions and state owned companies, but every Polish company can be part of the program, therefore, there are always more benefits, allowances and discounts and the program got a nationwide network. Since 2017, the card is digital and works via a smart phone app (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019). Good examples for the use of the card are such as food, books, travel tickets, but also discounts from fuel. Since 2019, the card is also available for parents, wo one had three or more dependent

children, therefore, the number of the users incrementally increased in the last two years (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017)

The most important family policy reform program in Poland is the Family 500 and its extended version, the Family 500+ Program. The program is the financial basis for family support (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015). The program entered into force in 2016 and contributed to a significant improvement in the financial situation of the families (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017). Since 2019, childcare allowance will be granted to all children up to the age of 18, regardless of family income. The Family 500+ program costs PLN 500 per month for each child without additional conditions. According to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, the cost of the program in 2016 was more than PLN 17 billion and covered 3.8 million children (2.78 million families) (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

6.2.4. Child Care Facilities

The Polish government wants to achieve a positive turn-around due to their family policy reforms. Therefore, they already started to think about the possible solutions for the higher number children in the various childcare facilities. Although the government implemented many programs for building new institutions, the number of the childcare places are already not enough and if the fertility rates will increase, there will be an even higher demand (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016). Therefore, an alternative system was implemented for the Polish parents and the local municipalities. The Toddler+ program should work as an additional possibility next to the traditional childcare facilities. In this case, municipalities, the parents, but also organisations, such as universities can get cash benefits from the central government to create new childcare facilities. Most of the time, these facilities can be smaller, then the regular ones. The intention is to react where the demand is high and if just a small group is needed, then some parents should also be able to open a new place for childcare, such as children's clubs, nurseries, or day care institutions. In 2019, the Polish government already paid 151 million PLN for these new childcare places. Therefore, the number of the childcare places highly increased in the last years and there is a fair chance for every child to get a place in facility (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

Changes were implemented in the Polish education system (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017). The Polish government implemented compulsory pre-school attendance for Polish children after their 6th birthday. This scheme has two main goals. Firstly, the children can start socialisation before the school which can help for eliminating the gaps due to their

different family backgrounds. Besides that, many parents' argument that not all children are ready to go to school at age of six, therefore, for these children, the existence of an obligatory pre-school system can be a good solution. This scheme gives the possibility for parents to choose whether their child can go to school already with 6, or the child should stay for one more year in a kindergarten with many elements, which helps them to prepare for the school entry. Next to that, there is an implementation since 2017, which gives every child the right to get a place in a kindergarten from 3 years old. It is a very important reform for the parents because they can choose freely, whether they can solve the childcare, or due to their working duties, they would like to use a kindergarten for their children (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

6.2.5. Special Tax Schemes for Families

Housing got very expensive for the younger generations in Poland. While the older generations could get an own home during the Soviet time more easily, nowadays, it is very hard for a young couple to buy a new home. Moreover, the rents got also much higher in the last years. Therefore, the government extended the old apartment for young people program. The new name is Apartment+ program, and it has been implemented since 2016 as a comprehensive housing scheme for all Polish people, but with an extra care for the families (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019). The program contains mostly state-owned new homes on state properties, where the families can get cheap rents and later, they have beneficiary possibilities to buy their new homes. The main responsibility for the program to build a bridge from the first own rent of the couples to the first own property as a family. Therefore, there are different houses and flats with different prices and sizes. The program is mainly available for Polish citizens without own properties (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016). An important part of the program is a cash benefit with the amount of 4,000 PLN. It should help for at least one parent to stay at home with the child and it should also help at the costs for the medical costs. Besides that, the program contains a housing scheme, too. There, the government financed until 2017 50 apartments for people with disabilities. For that purpose, 12,000,000 PLN was paid only in 2017 (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

The PLN for PLN system is a benefit scheme for families with extraordinary incomes, who are not able to use other family benefit systems (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016). This system meets the expectations of families whose income has exceeded the criterion required by the Act on family benefits. Benefits are then paid in the amount of the difference between the amount of benefits due, the so-called "The total amount of family benefits with allowances"

and the amount of family income received above the income criterion (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019). The amount of benefits is therefore reduced by the amount of "exceeding the income criterion" multiplied by the number of people in a given family (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

6.3. The Effected Social Policy fields

After the previous sub-chapters, it is visible that both countries implemented many different reforms in the field of social policy. To get a better understanding about the reform contents and make the following comparisons and analysis about the influencing ideas and party interests more transparent, the following tables shows, which sub-category of family policy was affected by the reforms. It enables the use of the concepts and previous scientific findings to clarify the reform contents into categories according the ideas and party politics which can be found behind them.

5. Table: Hungarian Reform Effects on Family Policy.

| Reform Effects on Family Policy in Hungary. | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Reform Package | Parental leave | Gender equality /LGBTQ ⁺ | Family allowances | Child-care facilities | Tax benefits for families |
| New terminology for family and marriage | X | X | X | | X |
| Younger generations must take care of their older relatives | | X | | X | |
| Subsidies for homemaking, housing (CSOK) | | | | | X |
| “Women 40” | X | X | | X | |
| Family tax benefits | | | | | X |
| Obligatory kindergarten for children | | X | | X | |
| Support of families at paying loans | | | | | X |
| “Academic” childcare benefit | | | X | | |
| Baby Bond | | | | | X |
| Reducing student loans | | X | | | X |
| Discount for newly married couples | | X | | | X |
| Promoting flexible working contracts especially for women | X | X | | X | |
| Increased involvement of fathers at child-rearing | X | X | | | |
| Schoolbooks free of charge for every child | | | | X | X |
| Free meals for children in school and during holiday | | | | X | X |
| Childcare allowance for three years again | X | X | | | |
| Sources: Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018; Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.). | | | | | |

6. Table: Polish Reform Effects on Family Policy

| Reform Effects on Family Policy in the Republic of Poland. | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Reform Package | Parental leave | Gender equality /LGBTQ ⁺ | Family allowances | Child-care facilities | Tax benefits for families |
| “Toddler+” Program | | | X | | X |
| Lower Retirement age:60 for women, 65 for men | | X | | X | |
| Mama 4 Plus | X | X | | | |
| Apartment+ | | | | | X |
| “Closing biological sex gap” | X | X | | | |
| Family friendly environment regardless of gender | | X | | | |
| New organisational standards for pregnant women in health care | | X | | | |
| Family 500+ Program | | | X | | X |
| Family 500 Program | | | X | | X |
| Behind Life Program | X | X | X | X | X |
| The Big family Card (KDR) | | | | | X |
| Obligatory pre-school rearing from 6 years | | | | X | |
| Higher Child benefit | X | | X | | |
| PLN for PLN system | | | X | | X |
| Sources: Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019. | | | | | |

7. Comparison

After describing the reform packages of the selected countries, this chapter presents a comparison between the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland. As the research finding demonstrate, both Hungary and Poland implemented comprehensive reforms in family policy. As the government programs highlight, both countries see family policy as an important policy field, due to the ageing population and negative demographic changes. The low fertility rates and decreasing population numbers due to death and immigration mostly to the West-European European member countries (Harari 2019) made clear that the governments have to implement new policies, otherwise the population will continue to decrease in the next decades. Although the population loss could have positive impacts on environment goals, it is a significant burden for economic growth and in connection to that to the achieving of higher standard of living (Nyitrai (ed.) 2019; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

As a possible way to turn the negative demographical trends would be to invite migrants and refugees from other countries, like it is the case in many other member states. However, the governing parties oppose such plans harshly because they would like to maintain the homogeneity of the population and culture in Hungary and Poland (Nyitrai (ed.) 2019; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019). Therefore, the only way to achieve population growth is to get higher fertility rates. This is the main intention and goal behind the family policies of both countries. The governments in Budapest and Warsaw wants to create a “Family Friendly” environment, where the people have every support for having at least two children (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

The following pages will use two level of comparisons. In the first level, all the reform packages from 2010s will collected and investigated, how they differ from each other. This type of collection will deliver the first information whether the family policy reforms have the same characteristics or not. Moreover, this type of collection illustrates also that the policymakers use different ideas and to achieve the wanted turn-around in the population (Inglot, Szikra, Rat 2012; Korkut, Esten-Ziya 2011). Therefore, the first graph of this chapter will show whether the single reform packages be a conservative right-wing policy, or they are more likely to follow the old socialist and paternalistic paths. Besides that, in some cases, neo-liberal economic goals will be detected (Szikra 2014).

After discussing this first analysis, the chapter goes further with the second level. The main goal of that is to answer the research question and identify the possible similarities, although the focus will be on the available differences of the policy packages. At this level, the focus will be not anymore on the single reform-packages, but much more on the bigger picture, which direct and indirect consequences the family and in general the social politics of the countries have. After describing these similarities and differences, the research question can be answered. It will be presented, whether the family policy reforms of the countries have the same direction, or as it as expected in the research question and literature review, that despite the similar political communication about their politics, the Polish and the Hungarian governments generate a different output with the family policy reforms.

7.1. Policy Outputs of Family Policy Reforms in Hungary and Poland

In the 2010s, both Hungary and Poland had a right-wing dominated government. These parties already informed the citizens before they got elected that they would like to implement many new changes in the social policy schemes of the countries. Therefore, it is already in their government programs visible, which path they would like to follow and what goals they would like to achieve after they get required majorities in the *sejm* and in the *országgyűlés* (Nyitray (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2010).

In the case of Hungary, the government program highlights in many times that there is an urgent need for reforming social and family policies in Hungary. According to their narrative, the previous governments after the political change in 1989 (in this case also the first Orbán cabinet) did not do enough to secure the needs of the families, or the previous governments even implemented many retrenchments in the system. Therefore, the family policy system of Hungary in the beginning of the 2010s years could not guarantee the secure and well-being of the families (Nyitray (ed.) 2010). Therefore, there main intension in this field was to create a “family friendly” environments, where every couple gets the possibility to start a family. The strengthening and supporting of families became a crucial part. It is clear from the document that their plan is to create an environment, where traditional family models get every support from the politicians. Next to that, the support of the middle class gained an extra importance, but next to that, it is also mentioned that the lower social classes should also get extra support at child rearing (Hungarian Parliament 2018; Grzebalska, Pető 2018).

In the case of Poland, a similar case can be found. The now ruling Polish government party declared already in the party program (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019) that social policy and

specially the support of families will get a crucial importance if they will be elected. The main background for the reforms is here also the insufficient social policy schemes of the previous governments since the political change in 1989. Therefore, the PiS party also declares a “family friendly” environment in the Slavic country after the Hungarian model. Their plan was to clearly rebuild and increase the system, while its efficiency should get also much better than before. Therefore, a clear increase of the benefits level and implementation of new family elements are highly important. The Polish program also speaks about the protection of the families, especially the traditional family forms. Therefore, also in Poland, the increase of marriages and promotion of traditional family forms are highly promoted (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

After describing the main intentions of the ruling parties of the countries, the next table presents the previously presented reform packages under a specific view. The research will investigate whether party-politics and the ideas have an influence on the family policy outputs. To understand, whether the reform directions are different or the same in the countries, it is important to find, what kind of logics and thoughts are behind the single reform packages. Therefore, the next table creates three clusters for the reform programs of both countries. Afterwards, an explanation of each clusters is presented. The findings of this grouping are crucial for understanding the hidden backgrounds and to define the directions of the research outputs. Therefore, this first level grounds for the comparison of the reforms of the selected countries later in this chapter.

To understand the directions, three clusters were made, namely the conservative ideas / right-wing policies, post-socialist legacy and neo-liberal ideas. The names of the clusters are specified for the cases. Post-socialist legacy also contains social-democratic and left-wing elements, but in the case of Hungary and Poland, these policies have mainly examples from the socialist time, therefore, they should be referred as socialist heritage (Csaba 2019; Inglot, Szikla, Rat 2012; Inglot 2018). The cluster neo-liberal ideas contain reforms with market-based schemes, where the responsibility of the citizens and the freedom of market are dominating (Csillag, Szelényi 2015; Rovny 2014). The conservative/right-wing policy cluster has its double name, because as it was visible in the previous chapter about conservatism, there is not one clear conservative path and sometimes right-wing policies contains also other elements in favor for the needs of middle and upper class citizens (Gibson 1996). Therefore, the cluster contains all the reforms, which use conservative path

or reforms which can be legitimated as right-wing policy due to their voters' interests (Gwiazda 2020; Korkut, Eslen-Ziya 2011).

7. Table: Policy directions of Family Policy Reforms in the Selected Countries.

| Policy directions of Family Policy Reforms in the Selected Countries | | |
|---|---|--|
| | Hungary | Poland |
| conservative ideas / right-wing policies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Terminology for marriage and family • younger generations must take care of their older relatives • Women 40 • support for big families at paying loans • Discount for newly married couples • Childcare allowance for three years again | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behind Life Program • Mama 4 Plus • The Big family Card (KDR) • New organisational standards for pregnant women in health care • Lower Retirement age:60 for women, 65 for men |
| post-socialist legacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schoolbooks free of charge for all families • Free meals for children in school during holidays • obligatory kindergarten for children • Baby Bond | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligatory pre-school rearing from 6 years • Family 500 Program • Family 500+ Program • Apartment+ |
| neo-liberal ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidies for homemaking (CSOK) • Family tax benefits • "Academic" childcare benefit and reducing student loans • Promoting flexible working hours especially for women • Increased involvement of fathers in child-rearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLN for PLN system • "Closing biological sex gap" • Family friendly environment in working places regardless of gender • "Toddler+" Program |
| Sources: Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019; Szikra 2014. | | |

7.1.1. Conservative Reform Outputs

It is important to note that in the most important reform packages, both in Hungary and Poland, conservative backgrounds are visible, although, this is more likely the case in Hungary. In the case of Hungary, the most significant reforms can be seen as part of this cluster. It is an important intension of the policymakers to support and concrete conservative views and ideas in the reforms. The new terminology of family and marriage in the new Hungarian ground law is an adequate example for that. Since 2012, the Hungarian ground law declares families as a group as a couple with children. Important is that the couple, so the parents must be from different genders. Therefore, the new family description does not acknowledge same-sex couples with children, or single-parents with children as a family. This declaration has already many effects. As an example, the term of family violence had to be changed to relationship violence, because the government acknowledged, that this type of violence can also happen in different family forms. The declaration of marriage as a bond between men and women is another good example for the conservative influence. Therefore, same-sex couples do not have the chance to get married and get the full support as their heterosexual peers. Although, it is important to note again that many benefits are also open for registered partners, which is also open for same-sex couples (Hungarian Parliament 2018; Grzebalska, Pető 2018).

Another significant conservative reform content is the “Women 40” program. This program enables women to retire after 40 years of employment. The main idea behind this reform is that the women who can retire earlier, can help care for their children and grandchildren in many unpaid care works. This is a clear point to maintain conservative gender roles, where men are on the labor market, while women are supposed to be after the families (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

To strengthen the conservative family ideas, the number of marriages is supposed to increase due to the new reforms. As an example, new married couples get tax benefits in the first year after their marriages. The notion is clear. People should follow a conservative path; get married and then have children. Although, due to equality issues, this possibility is also open for registered partners. From the Hungarian documents it is clear that the goal of the Hungarian government is to support large families with three or more children. Therefore, these big families can get serious discounts at paying loans. Last, but not least, the longer period of children allowance also shows a conservative background. Since this benefit level is available until the third birthday of a child, the selected parent (mostly the mother) can

stay at home longer with the child. This also means that their return to the labour market will be later, which can be seen also as a promotion of the male-breadwinner model (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Nyitray (ed.) 2010; Hungarian Parliament 2018).

In the case of Poland, the most significant programs are not part of the conservative reform packages. The most important and most visible program, the Family 500 Program and its extended version, the Family 500+ program shows much more post-socialist legacies. Nevertheless, there are also very important programs with conservative backgrounds. An important example is the Behind Life Program, which helps families with disabled children. This program clearly declares mothers as the main caregivers for these children. The texts about these programs are always speaking about the mothers and only in a few sentences it is clear, that in given cases, fathers can also benefit from this scheme. Besides this, this program clearly pushes the responsibility to the families with their disabled children. Due to this program, the families are seen as the perfect place for these children, and experts and special institutions are not as much promoted. Therefore, the state wants to stay in the background and intervene only in cases, where institutional care is necessary (Ministretwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

The promotion of the conservative gender roles and conservative views are also visible in the case of the Mama 4 Plus program. In this case, mothers can stay at home longer with their children, if they do not, or cannot go back to the labour market. Although the program is also open for fathers with some restrictions, the main idea behind this reform packages is clearly to help women to stay at home with their children. As an effect, they cannot go back to the labour market and can be dependent from their spouse and this state benefit, although the intention is the protect and save the needs of the mothers. Another program for supporting women in this cluster is the free health care for pregnant women, and not just for health care services around the pregnancy. Although this program is a great support for the future mothers, it should be also noted that because of this that fathers do not get any discount in the health system. Although it is clear that they will not suffer any symptoms due to the pregnancy, still, they could also use the free health care for other reasons, but also in connection to family planning, e.g. vasectomy (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016; Ministretwo Rodziny 2015).

The last program in this cluster are the new rules according to the pension years. There, the classification may be not as clear, but due to the idea of the government, this package was grouped to this cluster. According to the new rules, women can retire after their 60th birthday,

while men after their 65th birthday. The main idea between this scheme is that the government acknowledge the hard work of women during the child rearing and it also gives them the opportunity to help care for their grandchildren, while men should stay in the labor market. It also shows a clear conservative intervention, where women are caregiver and men as breadwinner (Ministertwo Rodziny 2015; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

7.1.2. Policy Reforms after Post-socialist legacies

Both countries were occupied by the Red Army after the second World War and the political, economic, and cultural influence of the Soviet Union was important for nearly 40 years until the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 (Ingłot 2008). Therefore, it is not a surprise that the socialist paternalistic social policy schemes have still heritages in the current system. Moreover, many citizens have also bittersweet memories to the old system, where the state guaranteed a low but secure standard of living (Fenger 2007). These are now the older generations, who due to the ageing population, have an increasing importance in elections, therefore, their wishes are significant for the current governments (European Election Database).

In Hungary, the main heritage of the socialist time is the importance of the universal benefit schemes in family policies. Although in the last 30 years, the system started to move to a more liberal system, universal systems are still dominating. The family policy reforms in the last decade wanted to bring an end to that era, nevertheless, there are also new reform packages, where these post-socialist legacies are visible. An important example for that are the different programs for children in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools. Due to programs, such as free schoolbooks for every child, or free meals in kindergartens and primary schools, the state intervene in the life of the families and still give them a comprehensive protection regardless of their financial situation. Therefore, also children in wealthy families can benefit from these models, although they would not need them necessarily. Next to that, the old Baby Bond system was reformed, where the state provides a free bank account with savings for every new-born child in the country and also for children in the former Hungarian territories (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

Besides that, previous examples, the obligatory kindergarten for children can be seen also more as a post-socialist legacy. Although one of the main idea behind this research is to help the socialisation of the children in the society (especially for Roma children), this program gives the possibility for every family to access a kindergarten or a crèche from a young age. These services are mostly free of charge and provides a state based childcare

facility system in the whole country. (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Nyitrai (ed.) 2010).

In Poland, the socialistic past is also very visible in the new family policy reforms. The government's main goal is to create a new system, which is available for every citizen in Poland. Although the Polish system had more liberal elements in the past, the new reform packages moved the system to a more universal one, where all families get the same amount of cash benefits. Naturally, there are higher schemes for families in need, still, it is clear that the most important family support program, the Family 500 and Family 500+ programmes are great examples for the post-socialist legacies. Due to the program, all families are entitled for support and the state clearly described themselves as an important actor at child-rearing. The way of the accessibility of the program is also telling; the bureaucratic burdens are low; the goal is to give the access for almost all couples with children. Although, the state also gives some expectations, such as marriage, or living in a traditional family model (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016; Ministretwo Rodziny 2015).

Besides Family 500, Poland also implemented an obligatory pre-school rearing from 6 years. In this case, the main idea was behind the reform also to socialise the children before starting school and closing social gaps between children from different social classes. Therefore, more kindergartens are planned, and the services are mostly free of charge for all families. Not just new child facilities, also the housing is promoted. The Apartment+ program gives the opportunity for many families to get a new home. In this case, the paternalist character of state is visible. Due to this program, the Polish families should not pay loans for banks and take the responsibility with that but enjoy the state-based housing scheme and get low-price rents. (Ministretwo Rodziny 2016; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

7.1.3. Neo-liberal Ideas in the Family Policy Reforms

The last cluster contains reform packages with neo-liberal ideas. Although the existence of such ideological backgrounds should not be surprising at right-wing parties, in this case, the situation is more difficult (Korys 1999). Both governments in Budapest and Warsaw often highlight that their governments are on the side of the citizens and their interests are more important than economic interests (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019). Therefore, the policymakers highlight the generous benefit schemes and does not follow a neo-liberal path with welfare state retrenchments and rationalisation. Therefore, it is interesting to see that many reform packages are clearly following the previously mentioned path.

In Hungary, the existence of these ideas is mainly visible in the reform programmes which effects the taxes of the families. In many cases, such as at the case of the CSOK – subsidies for homemaking, the biggest winners of the tax benefits are wealthier families with higher incomes, who can invest into new homes. In this case, poorer families do not have the chance to use this benefit, because they cannot build or buy a new home also with the state support. Next to that, the tax benefits also mainly benefit parents with higher incomes, while their poorer peers are often excluded from the benefit schemes. The reduced student loans and the implementation of the “Academic” childcare also have a limited target group. In one side, these programs promote the use of student loans, which is otherwise not well-seen in the government communication. On the other side, “academic” childcare benefit is also a program for a smaller target group, namely for women who can afford to study at a tertiary educational institution. This sees university as a clear economic investment, where the state intervenes, because it can increase the chance for successful achievement of a university degree (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Szikra 2014).

Besides that, the government implemented a much more flexible labour bill and promotes flexible working hours, especially for women. In the first sight, it can be totally conflicting with the conservative gender roles, but the narrative behind this reform is to make a work-life-balance for women easier. Another surprising reform program is here the promotion of increased involvement of fathers at child-rearing. This is a contradiction to many other reform schemes. Therefore, it shows nice, how the Hungarian government tries to manoeuvre between the economic interests and their own conservative views on gender roles and families (Szelényi, Csillag 2015).

In Poland, there is also an element, which can be clearly as capital centred. The PLN to PLN Program gives opportunity for Polish families to achieve tax benefits. The more tax a family pays, ergo as more their income is, as more they can save in a month. This also follow a neo-liberal path, where higher income groups benefit more, then their poorer contemporaries (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016).

An interesting new family policy program also fits to a market-based logic. The Toddler+ Program makes for families easier, to send their children to private crèches and kindergartens, or found an own group for young children. This program shows that there are not enough childcare facilities in Poland yet, therefore, the Polish government decided to support market-based solutions, because it can help for the parents to go back to the labour market earlier (Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

Gender pay gap is also an issue in Poland. Although the gap is not as huge as in many conservative West-European welfare states, there is still a difference between the wages of men and women. Therefore, the Polish government sees as an important task to close the “biological sex gap” in the country. The main intention between the reform is to increase women labour market participation and achieve higher economic numbers. Although the name of the program also shows the conservative views of the governments, because it clearly speaks about biological sexes and not gender. Next to that, a family friendly environment in working places regardless of gender is also a goal for the government in Warsaw. Here, the wished effect is also the better situation for women in the labour market (Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019; Grzebalska, Pető 2018).

7.2. Differences between the Family Policy Reforms

The main question of this research is whether the Hungarian and Polish family policy reforms have dissimilar directions. Although there are many similarities between the selected countries, the recent academic sources and researches showed that there was already a significant difference between the social policy systems (Fenger 2007). The question, whether the similar governing parties put the systems to a more similar design will be discussed and presented in this chapter. The research argued that the family policy systems will stay as different also after the research processes, because the ruling political actors in Hungary and Poland do not follow the same path, despite their similar narratives and political communication. Therefore, the expected output of the comparison should confirm that the family policy reforms of the two Central East European countries have been have different outputs.

The comparison in this chapter will use the separate research packages anymore in a more integrative way. In this second level of comparison, the differences and similarities will be discussed from a larger picture. Instead of the single packages, the bigger effects will be analyzed, and their effects will be clustered into the possible similarities and differences. Due to the comparative design of this study, the main exercise will be to find visible differences between the two countries. Nevertheless, the exact enumeration of the similarities is also crucial. After the discussion of the similarities and differences, the findings will be presented in summarizing tables.

7.2.1. Similarities in the Family Policy Reforms

Although the research suggested that the family policy reforms should differ due to the influence of the ruling right-wing governments and their “bricolage” politics (Szikra 2014), it should mention that there are some similarities. This does not mean that the comparison or study failed, on the contrary, it shows the complexity of the given research and the difficult settings of a whole policy system of two countries.

The main similarities between the Hungarian and Polish politics can be seen in their narratives. Both countries declared their politics and their schemes as a setting, which helps to achieve a “family friendly” country and social politics. It is visible from all of the used documents that this narrative of a family friendly country plays an important role both in Budapest and in Warsaw (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Although the policies concerning retirement can be seen as a different policy field, still, it has also many effects for the family policy system. Therefore, the same directions at retirement ages should be mentioned as a clear similar characteristic. In Hungary, the government introduced the Women 40 program, which makes clear for women to get pension noticeably earlier than men. In Poland, the government set the retirement ages at 60 for women and 65 for men (Csillag, Szelényi 2015; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Both in Hungary and in Poland, there are significant differences between social classes and families. Therefore, it was often a problem for the secondary schools that their 1st class pupils came with very different backgrounds. Therefore, both countries introduced obligatory pre-school programs to support the early socialization and realignment of the children (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

The third big cluster of similarities can be seen at family/labor market policies. Although both countries try to support women to stay home with their children for 2 years in Poland and 3 years in Hungary, on the contrary, both countries tries to support the labor market participation of women with part-time contracts, liquidate of gender pay gaps and settle laws for a better work-life-balance (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

Although there are some similarities between the reforms, it is visible that most of the reform packages are not in this cluster. Moreover, this cluster contains smaller programs without many effects. Besides that, the main similarity be the same communication about their programs and policies.

7.2.2. Similar Ideas of the Family Policy Reforms

In the case of the narratives, the likewise description behind the “Family Friendly” slogan is an important similarity. There should be also pay attention to the word family. Both governments highlight that according to their ideas, the term family is nowadays in the Western countries in danger. Both governments use a traditional term for families with children and different-sex parents. According to their view, the extension of the term family to single-parent families, patchwork-families or to rainbow-families can be the end of an era, where families are the smallest and strongest units of a society. Therefore, both governments put as a main goal to “secure” the traditional “Christian” family model. This objective is visible not only in their communication, but also in their reform packages, e.g. marriage as a requirement for benefits, the exclusion of the same-sex couples from marriage (Nyitrai (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Similar ideas are also visible in the case of the pension policy. In both cases, the countries try to support women to retire earlier, because in this case, they have more time to look after their younger family members and state interventions, such as childcare facilities will be not so needed. Next to that, with these programs, both governments set a clear sign next to the conservative gender roles (Csillag, Szelényi 2015; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

As it was already mentioned, increased labour market participation of women is an important objective for both countries. The aim in both countries to increase labor market participation for every gender and create a situation, where the parents should not decide between career and children (Nyitray (ed.) 2010; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017).

7.2.3. Differences in the Family Policy Reforms

After listing the similarities, the following paragraphs describe the differences between the reforms in Hungary and Poland.

The first clear difference is that Poland put much more effort into new universal benefits, which are available for all Polish families. The benefit levels are also increased in most of the cases. It is enough to think about the flagship reform program, to the Family 500 Program. There, the main content is a universal cash benefit available for all families regardless of their social status and economic background. On the contrary, Hungary concentrates more on implementing different benefit systems for selected groups of the society. In this case, the level of the cash benefits is not or just insignificant increased. A

good example for that is the childcare allowance system of the countries. While Poland increased the level of the cash benefits, Hungary reextended the benefit for three years, but the level of the cash benefit has not changed in the last ten years (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016).

Another important difference is that Hungary concentrates on big families with three or more children. Many of the benefits are available only for these families and families with one child or two children are excluded, because the Hungarian government sees the key solution for the demographic changes in the protection and support of families with more than two children. In the meantime, Poland implemented their programs with the goal that they already deliver higher benefits for families with two children, because as it is also clear from Polish documents, the Polish experts sees crucial that the families should be helped for getting a second baby (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016).

Children and in overall, people with disabilities have often difficult problems. Therefore, Poland started to implement programs for disabled children, adults, and elderly. Their notion is to create a system where families with persons with disabilities can have access to higher benefits. On the contrary, Hungary sees the care-work of these people as a duty and responsibility of the families where the state should not play an active role. Therefore, the benefit levels for disabled children did not increase in the last 10 years, although there were some new programs planed at the end of the decade, but these programs are not working yet (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018).

Another difference between Hungary and Poland that Hungary wants to create an environment, where the different generations of the families should help to each other. That is the reason for the obligatory care duty of the younger generations to their parents, but counter, grandparents, mainly grandmothers should be involved into childrearing. Therefore, the country opened the parental leave also for grandparents. The effect of these reforms must be a stronger family bond between the family members and smaller role of the state in the case of childcare, elderly care, or the care of family members with disabilities (Hungarian Parliament 2018; Nyitrai (ed.) 2010).

Housing and programs for housing are important pillars in both countries. Nevertheless, the programs have different characteristics and achieve a different target group. In Hungary, the local housing program "CSOK" provides cheap loans and loan discounts for families, who

would like to build or buy a new home. Due to the need of their own capital, the program is mainly helpful for middle and upper classes and lower social classes cannot benefit as much of this program. In the Polish case, the Apartment+ program provides a more centralized program, which helps people to move to new state-owned homes. There, the families can rent their homes for inexpensive prices, which helps mainly for the lower social classes to get long-term housing for reasonable prices (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019).

Besides the previous comparable cases, there are many smaller programs, which differs in the two countries. Hungary pays attention for free education and free meals for kindergarten children and pupils. These elements try to compensate the poverty of the families and give better chances for the children. In the meantime, Poland pays more attention into its health care system. A good example is the free health care benefits for pregnant women in Poland, while in Hungary, there are no significant health care reforms with effects on family policy (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2016).

7.2.4. Different Ideas of the Family Policy Reforms

It is visible that the most important programs are differing, although officially, both governments are working on the same ideological objectives. Therefore, the reforms force the systems into a different path. This subchapter shows these different ideas behind the family policy reforms.

While the Polish system implemented a more universal benefit system in many family policy areas, the Hungarian government works with more selecting programs. The reason is that the Polish government would like to give possibility for every citizen regardless of financial and social status to be able to receive its benefits. On the contrary, the focus in Hungary is on the Middle-class families. Therefore, the benefit levels are often increasing with amount of salaries and in the case of some schemes, working-class people do not have the chance for access, due to lacking capital. Besides that, Hungary implemented many special benefit systems for university students, advantageous tax benefit systems for middle-class families. As an effect, the Hungarian system support much more middle-class families and give disadvantages for the lower income groups, while Poland forced its system to more equal system, where every family should be benefited from the programs (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017).

Another ideological difference can be seen in the case of care-work. While the Polish government tries to support the families and open more and more institutions and schemes for people with special needs, the Hungarian system sees care-work as a duty of the families. Therefore, care homes are accessible only for persons who can afford it, otherwise, the state provides financial benefit schemes for the families, but the people with special needs (both young and old) should stay at home (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Csaba 2019).

Housing is an important pillar for both family policy system. Although both countries created a housing scheme, there is a significant difference between them. In Poland, the housing scheme is targeted for all families with a special focus to families, who cannot afford to buy an own home or pay loans. Therefore, state-promoted house rental was introduced which is an affordable variant for working-class families. In Hungary, the housing system based on the opportunity to buy an own home. As a support, the state provides cheap loans. Unfortunately, this is often not enough for poor families, because they do not have enough capital to get a loan. This case also shows that Hungary follows a more conservative path, while Poland tries to provide a universal system (Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Szikra 2018).

7.3. Synthesis of the Comparison

8. Table: Similarities and Differences between the family policy reforms in Hungary Poland.

| Similarities and differences between the family policy reforms in Hungary Poland | |
|---|--|
| Similarities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration of a family friendly country and social politics • Promoting a “traditional heteronormative marriage-based” family model; Disadvantages for deviant family forms e.g. rainbow-families • Lower retirement age for women • Obligatory pre-school programs • Promoting traditional gender roles, while promoting the labour market participation of women • Open parental leave policies for both genders • Work-life balance for the parents | |
| Differences | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare allowances: higher benefit level in Poland, longer benefit level in Hungary • Special benefits programs for selected groups in Hungary: “academic” childcare benefit, tax benefits for higher income groups • Support of bigger families (3+ children) in Hungary, while the most benefits are open from two children in Poland • Action plan and higher benefit levels for families with children with special needs in Poland • Involving grandparents in childcare in Hungary: “Grandparent-leave” • Support of housing for families; in Hungary more for the middle class, in Poland a more comprehensive program for all social classes • Universal programs for pupils in Hungary: free books and meals regardless of financial situation of the family • Public health care benefits for pregnant women in Poland | |
| Sources: Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019. | |

The previous listings showed the differences and similarities between the systems. It is clearly visible that there are more and more significant differences than similarities between the reform outputs of the countries. Therefore, the research question of this research can be confirmed, the family policy systems are going in a different direction also after the reform processes.

Poland was in the beginning of the 2010s a country with a solid family policy system with many liberal elements. After the reforms of the last decade, the country became a more universal and generous system with significant higher cash benefit elements. Although the conservative ideologies are in many cases visible, it is also clear that the country moved to a more gender-equal system, where both fathers and mothers have the change to access for the benefit programs.

On the contrary, Hungary had in the beginning of the 2010s an already very generous family policy system with long and high benefit levels. Although there were many retrenchments due to the economic crisis in 2009-2010. The elected right-wing government since 2010 rebuilt many elements and cancelled the previous retrenchments. Moreover, the system got many new elements. In these cases, it should be noted that the new elements do not have a very universal characteristic anymore, they are mostly defined for selected social groups. Therefore, it can be noted that the Hungarian system moved from a very universal system to a more liberal-conservative pattern, where the role of the family elevated while poor families often cannot benefit from the newly implemented programs due to the lack of their incomes or capital.

9. Table: Similarities and Differences of party programs in Hungary Poland.

| Similarities and Differences between party programs in Hungary Poland |
|---|
| Similarities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening conservative values and promoting a “traditional heteronormative marriage-based” family model • Differences between genders at family and retirement policies • Neo-liberal doctrine at working contracts |
| Differences |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal benefit schemes for all families in Poland • Benefiting middle-class families in Hungary • Promoting to buy own homes in Hungary, while promotion of state-based renting programs in Poland • Tax benefits for all families in Poland, higher tax benefits for middle-class families in Hungary. • Care-work as state responsibility in Poland, while own responsibility in Hungary. • Strengthening the role of state in Poland, while Strengthening the role of state and citizens in Hungary. |
| <p>Sources: Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma 2017; Hungarian Parliament 2018; Ministrestwo Rodziny 2015; Narodowy Komitet Obchodów 2017; Nyitrai, Zsolt (ed.) 2010; Prawa i Sprawiedliwości 2019; Szikra 2018; Csillag, Szelényi 2015.</p> |

The analysis about the party programs also show some similarities, but the differences are more significant. There can be found three similar party direction in Hungary and Poland. Firstly, it is clear that both parties are strengthening the conservative values, such as the traditional family model, marriage-based families, different tasks and responsibilities for people with different genders. This is not only visible in the reforms, but also in the discourse about these topics. Secondly, gender-based retirement ages were set in both countries. This gives a link to the first point, next to that, a common interest can be seen to achieve more places for younger people on the labor market. Thirdly, both parties are strongly promoting atypical working contracts and put more right in the hand of the employers. With these legislations the governments in Budapest and Warsaw tries to make the country more interesting for international companies and therefore tries to achieve a better functioning economy.

On the other side, there are significant differences between the politics of the ruling parties in the selected countries. While Poland pushed its system into a more universal scheme, Hungary did the contrary. The Hungarian government started to implement programs, where

middle and upper-class families can get more support from the state, as their working-class peers. As a linking point, Hungary introduced a housing program, where the government supports the families to get their own properties, while in Poland, the government tries to build more state-owned homes with affordable rent for the families in need. This is also an evidence that the Hungarian government's focus is on the middle-class families, while in Poland, the poor families have also access to the new housing programs. The case with tax benefits also show a similar path. While Hungary concentrates on tax schemes for middle-class families, Poland introduced a system, which tries to support all Polish families. Besides the previous points, there is also one significant difference. While the Polish state plays an enormous role in the new reforms and provides a comprehensive social policy set up from childcare to care homes, the Hungarian model pushes many responsibilities to the citizens and the market.

To summarize, although the same ideological narrative exists, the introduction of the "family friendly" environment in both countries, which often follows the Hungarian unorthodox solutions in Poland, still, the policy outputs are differing. Therefore, while Hungary and Poland share many socioeconomical similarities, the family policy system of Hungary and Poland highly differs, moreover, the recent family policy reforms have also different characteristics, although the existence and importance of right-wing governments are visible in both countries. The reasons are visible not just on the different social policy reforms, but also on the differing party programs and objective. While Poland works on a family policy system for the whole population, the Hungarian system often favours families with higher incomes.

8. Conclusion

This research project deals with a rapidly changing policy field, namely with family policy. The main objective of this thesis is to identify the hidden pattern behind the reform processes in two selected Central East European countries, namely in Hungary and the Republic of Poland. To identify the reform packages and investigate whether the ruling government parties and their ideas forces the policy field, the research took the following steps. After a brief introduction into the subject and clarifying the research question, a brief overview was presented about the overall policy changes in Hungary and Poland. Afterwards, a review of the previous scientific works was presented to investigate the academic knowledge of the topic and get a broader view about the policy processes in the selected countries.

Subsequently, definitions and possible explanations for policymaking were discussed, where the role of political parties and ideas were presented. After this first part, the thesis followed with the description of the research methodology and the methodological approach. Due to the use of Mill's Most Similar Systems Design the case selection and the comparative design was also explained. Later the findings of the empirical research are visible. Firstly, the research packages are discussed in both countries and their effects on family policy. Afterwards, the comparison took place, where the diverse reforms were synthesized into the differences and similarities between the selected countries and the background ideas were identified.

For the supporting the answer of the thesis, two research question were set. These questions helped to shape the research analysis and look for the information and data, which were valuable for this research. The questions were the following: How do the governing right-wing parties and conservative ideas affect the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland between 2010 and 2019? Do these effects the reform outputs in a similar or different way?

After the analysis of the empirical data and comparison the findings in the two countries, the thesis is able to answer the previous questions. The results show that the governing Hungarian and Polish parties do not follow a right-conservative path, but a populist "*bricolage*" politics with different ideologies, therefore, the family policy outputs differ a lot, although the official intentions of the policy-makers in both countries are the same. It means that the governing right-wing parties and conservative ideas were affecting the reforms actively, but this influence was not the same, because the policymakers used multiple ideas

and logic behind the reforms. Moreover, the comparison of similarities and differences showed that although there are some similarities, in general, the family policy reforms in Hungary and Poland differs a lot, because the main target group and the characteristics of the newly implemented elements demonstrate serious variances. While Poland's family policy became a more universal system, the Hungarian system became a more conservative scheme, where the most benefits are designed for middle-class families.

These findings are also visible in the previous researches. The findings of Szikra (2015) are confirmed, because it is clear the ruling parties are using a set of different ideas. Furthermore, the disadvantage of single-parent and rainbow families (Pető, Grzebalska 2018; Suwada 2019) are also visible in the findings of the research. Besides that, the promotion of conservative gender roles and burdens for women are also evident in this research project, as it was written by Michoń (2015).

Overall, the reviews and the empirical findings described a working family policy system in both countries. Although there are disadvantaged groups from some benefits and the benefit level can be seen not high enough in some cases, the Hungarian and Polish systems are comprehensive, and they are able to support the basic needs of families in need. Moreover, in Poland, there is a visible shift towards an even more open system with simple access for the families. On the contrary, Hungary started to go on a system, where middle-class families are clearly favoured.

Since 2010, both systems changed a lot and provide better security for the families. The different tax benefit systems in Hungary, or the Family 500+ Program in Poland helped to deliver more for families in the countries. Although the systems can be seen as functioning, there is a question, whether the new reforms are good enough for the enormous investments, which were made in the system. Moreover, due to the conservative ideological changes, there comes a question, whether the influence of the state would be not too much into the life of the families. The support of marriage, the support of the traditional family models would be not a problem. Every political party and government can set its own supported values. Nevertheless, the exclusion or at least burdens for families in non-traditional families, the forcing of the traditional gender-roles and the care-giver role of women are serious issues. These negative discriminations are against the European, but also the standards for many parties and people in Hungary and Poland. Therefore, a careful monitoring of the recent reform plans is highly needed for these EU member states. The recent discourses about more conservative abortion rights, exclusion of same-sex couples

for starting a family shows that there is a chance for negative discrimination in the future reform plans (Grzebalska, Pető 2018; Csaba 2019).

It is also important to note that the plans of the ruling Polish and Hungarian parties are not clear yet. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the therefore coming economic crisis, it is questionable whether the governments can continue their superabundant family policy reforms, or will they concentrate on the maintaining of the recent situation. Either way, there is a fear that the parties will start to implement more ideological reforms, which do not cost much money, show the thought and wishes of their own voters, but cause serious negative effects for different minorities in society.

Next to that, it will be interesting to see in the next years, whether the implemented reforms are working, and Hungary and Poland can turn around their negative demographical data without migration. There are already small improvements in the number of new marriages and fertility rates, but the numbers are as high yet, as wished by the governments. If the next years show a significant increase, the Hungarian and Polish governments can show that their often unorthodox and non-liberal policy course are valid. If not, there, it is an interesting question, whether the governments will change their policies, or will they blame the smaller increases with external factors.

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